philippine studies: historical and ethnographic viewpoints

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Raul Casantusan Navarro

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Pagbuo ng Lipunang Filipino, 1972–1986

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Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints
vol. 63 nos. 4 (2015): 582–85

involvement of ordinary citizens in the public sphere, Philippine modern democracy remains imaginary.

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Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2014. 203 pages.

Music in the Philippines is a rare topic for scholarly research. Even more exceptional is a critical examination of music's link to the historical and political issues of the country whence it comes. Raul Casantusan Navarro's latest opus, *Musika at Bagong Lipunan: Pagbuo ng Lipunang Filipino, 1972–1986*, once again addresses the dearth of academic studies on an art form that is strongly associated with Filipinos. Navarro, a University of the Philippines College of Music alumnus and associate professor, reprises his work that granted him the National Book Award (History Category) in 2008, entitled *Kolonyal na Patakaran at ang Nagbabagong Kamalayang Filipino: Musika sa Publikong Paaralan sa Pilipinas, 1898–1935* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2007). *Musika at Bagong Lipunan*, also written in Filipino, similarly examines how music intersects with power, ideology, and social transformation.

But while the author's previous study explored music's role as a prime tool of imposing an American colonial worldview, the novelty of Navarro's recent book is not only its focus on a frequently overlooked aspect of Philippine culture, but also its choice of an undeveloped area of inquiry on the Marcos dictatorship. Instead of providing another evaluation of martial law's ramifications, Ferdinand or Imelda's character, or their government policies and programs, Navarro's research locates music's crucial role in the political agenda of the First Couple and in the anti-Marcos struggle.

Many of the author's most salient insights revolve around the theme of music's instrumentality in consolidating power to control other people.

Navarro reasons that the medium of sound as a means to induce Filipinos to support the Marcos administration was easier to disseminate and less affected by time, place, and environmental conditions than other art forms (96). His survey of government-sanctioned compositions during the 1970s and 1980s suggests that the regime created songs to charm and appease the people with lyrics consisting mostly of exaltations of local culture; metaphors of hope and patriotism; references to desired social conditions of progress and prosperity; and promoting virtues such as beauty, diligence, discipline, obedience, and peace. Some of these tunes were compiled and utilized as teaching materials for public schools. These selections included contributions from esteemed local composers like George Canseco, Felipe De Leon, Lucrecia Kasilag, and Lucio San Pedro.

Further highlighting music's political value to the regime is Navarro's accounting of institutions, organizations, facilities, programs, and incentives that were established during martial law. Examples he mentioned include the Philippine School for the Arts, National Arts Center, League of Filipino Composers, Philippine Society for Music Education, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Concert at the Park, Young Artists Foundation of the Philippines, and the National Music Competition for Young Artists. His descriptions reveal that these structural mechanisms were not entirely genuine initiatives to change Filipinos' cultural sensibilities toward a high regard for their indigenous traditions and local talents. Rather, these musical endeavors were part of the broader social engineering project to realize Marcos's vision of *Bagong Lipunan* (New Society). The book argues that music became an expression of this ideological construct, which concealed Marcos's political ambition of perpetual rule and the country's actual state of poverty and political persecution. The New Society pretended to be a patriotic program that would bring peace and order, institutional improvements, land and labor reforms, basic social services, and economic progress. The songs of the New Society served as the regime's discourse that portrayed the fulfillment of these promises.

Navarro's assessment fine-tunes and expands our understanding of music as a key element in the state's cultural apparatus to maintain domination over its citizenry. Through commissioned hymns such as "Masagana 99" (Prosperous 99), "Tayo'y Magtanim" (Let Us Plant), "Magandang Pilipinas" (Beautiful Philippines), "Bagong Pagsilang"

(Rebirth, also known as "March of the New Society"), "Bagong Lipunan" (also known as "Hymn of the New Society"), and "Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa" (One Nation, One Spirit), Marcos's imagination of a country in his image and likeness was given form. Music was converted into a perfidious medium to advertise his political platform and aestheticize objective conditions. Furthermore, these arrangements represented distortions of ideas: democracy is conflated with despotism, as patriotism is with subservience. Songs were made to conquer the minds of the people.

While the book amply explains music as a tool of indoctrination, it also contributes illuminating thoughts that explore music's impact in mobilizing power to resist. Navarro elaborates on several musical compositions, such as those by Jess Santiago, Bonifacio Abdon, and Noli Queano among others, that collectively became the counterdiscourse against the regime. The author cites protest songs as primary examples of music transformed into a vehicle of dissenting sentiments and representations of the country's situation. Although these creative works similarly featured lyrics suggesting love of country and the value of freedom and sacrifice, they also included verses about people's experiences of abuse, hardship, loss, sorrow, and struggle. They also included references to exploited sectors such as farmers and workers, as well as ideas identified with socialism. In contrast to the songs of the New Society, which were primarily disseminated through the nation's institutional systems of education, media, and the military, Navarro describes these musical counternarratives as emanating from its citizens of different classes and sectors and circulating through protest actions (146).

Navarro's analysis brings up several instructive points on how music can be a cultural resource for resistance. Songs of protest such as "Huwad na Kalayaan" (False Freedom), "Butil ng Palay" (Grain of Rice), "Fantasya" (Fantasy), and "Makibaka" (Struggle) demonstrate human creativity by serving as figurative venues of expressions that differed from the regime's discourse. They encouraged attitudes other than capitulating to Marcos's rule. In a context of repression music afforded alternatives of doing, thinking, and feeling. Navarro also reinforces the notion of how music can be timeless. Navarro's discussion suggests that many Filipinos saw the continuing relevance of past creative works, such as "Bayan Ko" (My Nation, originally a poem by Jose Corazon de Jesus) and "Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa" (Love of Country, originally a poem by Andres Bonifacio), because they

symbolically express the spirit of struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. Music creates a social bond that brings people together by articulating similar experiences of suffering or confinement, and common sentiments of unrealized social aspirations such as genuine freedom. Moreover, music becomes a messenger of news by supplying censored information or stories outside mainstream media. Tributes like "A Song for Macli-ing" document the indigenous people's opposition against the government's Chico River Dam construction, which had ramifications on their ancestral domain, and the murder of their leader, Macli-ing Dulag, by the military (148–49).

Navarro's insights on music's contrasting roles indicate the broader importance of this work. In particular his elaboration on the linkages between music and society resonates with the sociological premise that acknowledges the profound role of social factors in shaping cultural and historical developments of a nation. Navarro's analytical contributions cast music as both a constraining and an enabling social force. Songs determine and are determined by society and its constituents.

The author has done a commendable job in the arrangement of his argument from a contextual discussion to a particularized discourse on music per se. Interesting to note however is how the author overlooked an equally compelling and edifying illustration of music as resistance by Teresita Gimenez-Maceda entitled, "Problematizing the Popular: The Dynamics of Pinoy Pop(ular) Music and Popular Protest Music" (*Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 2007:390–413). Navarro's argument on forms of music as counterdiscourse to the Marcos regime could have been more persuasive had he considered or engaged with Gimenez-Maceda's idea that some mainstream hits, such as "Himig Natin" (Our Song) and "Bonggahan" (from *bongga*, which means flashy), were subtle criticisms of life under martial rule.

Overall Navarro's book merits much praise, and its limitations are secondary. This contribution is a welcome addition to the academic literature not only on Philippine music but also on politics, history, society, and culture.

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