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How Music Affects Us

Interview 1: Ernesto Escanilla

The very first interviewee, Ernesto Escanilla, is my grandfather. I decided to interview him first not only because of the difference in our age and gender but also because of our tastes in music. While it's expected for us to have different tastes in music because of the years in which we grew up, I'm interested in how certain music that my grandpa listens to affects him yet doesn't give me a similar reaction.

What is your favorite song to listen to?

"The Prayer" was my grandfather's answer. I asked him why and his answer was very simple "Kasi, maganda yung boses nila" which, translated from Tagalog to English, means "Because their voices are beautiful. The version my grandpa listens to is the one with Andrea Bocelli and Celine Dion so it's understandable why he describes their voices as beautiful. I inquired further on what about their voices he likes specifically to try and figure out how it affects how he feels.

What do you specifically like about their voices?

Delving into the tones of their voices, my grandpa responds "malinaw at malakas" which translates to "clear and strong". While my grandpa isn't one for the technical aspects of music, he is still able to describe the richness of Bocelli and Dion's voices. This hints that he's able to feel the music at a deeper level than just the "notes".

How do their voices make you feel?

After I asked this, my grandpa took a second to think and said "Mabuti, kasi gusto kong makinig sa boses na may talento" — translating to "Good, because I like listening to voices with talent". He then went on to describe singers from the Philippines because our country is known for always having karaoke at parties or even just as a way to unwind at home. He says that Filipino singers make him feel proud because they sing very well and can reach high notes (this also references that Filipino singers love belting and that having that ability means you're great at singing).

Do you get emotional listening to this kind of music?

“Hindi ako nakakaramdam ng malalim na emosyon, pero ang sarap pakinggan yung music na to. Gusto ko lang yung tunog” which translates to “I don’t feel deep emotions, but it feels really good to listen to this kind of music. I just like the sound.” he responds. I believe that while my grandpa is the type to listen to music often and even dances along to it, he doesn’t feel the same as I do when listening to music. It’s not the depth of feeling, but being able to have a lively atmosphere. While my grandpa can feel emotions from music, it’s purely for enjoyment and entertainment.

What places do you think of when listening to music?

“Na iisip ko yung noong bata pa ako... tumugtog ako ng gitara para sa lola mo...” — “I think about when I was younger... I used to play guitar for your grandma (referencing that he was trying to woo her with music)”. With the guitar playing, my grandpa said he would also sing to my grandma (even though he wasn’t the greatest singer in the neighborhood in his youth). He continued by telling me the story of his and my grandma’s younger years when their families wouldn’t let them be together and my grandma’s dad even hired someone to kill my grandpa. It’s a familiar story told every year, but it’s interesting to hear how music helps my grandpa reminisce past experiences that were crazy at the time and are now laughable stories today.

It’s safe to say that my grandpa remembers his hometown in the Philippines where he met my grandmother. I can also state that we have different places in our heads when listening to music. I think of other possible worlds and universes while my grandpa reminisces about his and my grandma’s lives on this planet, in the Philippines, in the city of Antipolo.

What do you think of modern music?

“Mukhang upbeat yung modernong musika na naririnig ko ngayon. Meron din hindi naaangkop na musika — kaya hindi ako madalas nakikinig sa modernong musika” — meaning: “The modern music I hear nowadays sounds upbeat. There are some inappropriate songs so I don’t listen to modern music very often”. After asking this question, we had a conversation about how music has often been inappropriate, but only recently has it been clearer because the lyrics are more direct.

After discussing modern music, we talked about different genres to which my grandfather stated “Hindi ko gusto yung mga metal na musika kasi sumisigaw lang sila” which can be interpreted as “I don’t like metal music because all they’re doing is screaming” and not, by his definition, singing. I compare my liking of metal music to his and realize that, because of how he grew up, my grandpa may still believe in metal stereotypes that imply metal is inherently diabolic while

also taking vocals at face value. I can appreciate the work that goes into metal vocals and will often listen to metal music; my grandpa, however, prefers music that's gentler to the ears.

The last genre I asked him about was rock and we were able to connect in our appreciation for the artists and songs associated with the genre. "Parang pang lalaki yung rock music" meaning "Rock music feels like it's for guys", my grandpa laughs, because he didn't know many women who enjoyed rock music. A small hometown, a country that loves belting, and having mostly Christian/ Catholic, traditional, values brew little fondness for any inappropriate-sounding music — especially, for women.

Overall, I can see that with the difference in music tastes, my grandpa and I also differ in how we feel about music and how we feel the music but it doesn't stop us from enjoying the same genres or the same songs in different ways.

Interview 2: Cecilia Vidal

Interview 3: Krizelda Howell