# *Harana*: Fusion between Filipino indigenous and Hispanic music

The paper explores the intersection of indigenous and Hispanic music styles present in the *harana* by studying features that demonstrate the fusion of Hispanic influence with that of local tradition. The *harana* exhibits the orality of indigenous poetry shown in its choice of words and the rhythm of the *danza*, a Spanish music.

When one studies Cebuano culture and heritage, one cannot isolate it from the Cebuano singer. The ambivalent sense of identity due to several historical impediments brought about by Spanish colonization is easily exhibited by the modern Cebuano’s preference for a second language for everyday expression. The modern Cebuano singer finds himself torn in expressing oneself accordingly in the language that one is born into, yet the prevalent colonial mentality influences his preference to identify and express himself in English.

This study on the *harana* explores the Cebuano’s fluid identity. The *harana* is a hybrid form that emerged from the fusion of pre-existing Cebuano and Hispanic elements. Clearly, the *harana* demonstrates intangible cultural heritage characterized by the persisting orality of indigenous poetry while being permeated by new sensibilities brought about by colonization. The *harana* in this study illustrates that intersection which enriches the folk tradition owing to its contribution of a more elaborate oral tradition. According to Corazon Canave-Diaquino in *Folk Traditions*,1 “Hispanization was tied up with religious conversion and the people’s thinking was affected, resulting in a hybrid expression tinged with a Latin taste.” Because of a strong indigenous strain, it produced a music that was disconnected from the Catholic worship. As proof, the *harana* has its own distinctive style, its arrangement is simple and straight-forward. It always starts with an introduction of solo guitar then lyrical verses follow with a little guitar strumming. Resil Mojares adds that Spanish colonization “left a deep

imprint on native poetic traditions . . . and cultivated new themes and sentiments.”2 This phenomenon enriches the native poetic tradition.

The *harana* being a descendant of the Hispanic and the indigenous, exhibits common elements derived from both traditions. *Harana* is a Spanish traditional form of music where a man introduces himself to a woman, usually when she has just arrived from a big city to the countryside for a vacation. It has its early antecedents in the *las mañanitas*,3 the Mexican tradition which involves serenading the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Patroness of Mexico, before sunrise every year on December 12, her feast day. The day begins with a procession around church grounds during which the faithful honored the Virgin by singing *las mañanitas* in the chilly dawn air. The *mariachis* sing “*Madre mia de Guadalupe, dame ya tu bendicion, recibe estas mañanitas con un humilde corazon*,”4 paving the way for the celebration of the Holy Mass.5 Everyone then enjoyed the traditional hot chocolate and *pan dulce* (Mexican pastry). This custom of singing *Las Mañanitas* also applies to birthday or Mother’s Day celebrations and was and is still being practiced in the Philippines. Here is an example of a birthday *mañanita*

entitled “Katahum sa Kabuntagon”6:

Katahum sa Kabuntagon Beauty of the morning

Kami nagtukaw karon We who are awake

Ikaw among sangpiton We will call you

Ning langitnon nga gahum With this heavenly power

Ang kahayag ning kandila The light of this candle

Mag-awit ug magmaya Will sing and make merry

Aron magmabulokon So it will be colorful

Ang kalinaw magdayon And peace will come Chorus:

Mahayag na ang langit The sky is light

Sa kasilaw sa adlaw The sun is bright

Oh! Bangon sa igsoon Oh! Rise to my sister Ning kadlawong matahum On this beautiful dawn

Ning adlaw mong natawhan On your birthday Kabulakan ning buklad Flowers bloom

Gibunyagan sa ngalan Is christened

Diosnong grasya imo na. Heavenly grace be yours.

The *harana* borrows from the 19th-century tradition of songs of courtliness where wayward knights usually sing of love beneath the towers of fair maidens in medieval scenes. The pure young woman is protected inside the tower while the suitor who comes along from wandering is about to show his admiration and seek her attention. The lines of “The

Serenade” (1825) so reads

Rise lovely Maid, shake off they balmy slumbers, Haste to thy casement, list the tuneful strain, Fondly he loves who breathes in warbling numbers, Ne’er wilt thou meet a heart so true again.7

Another example which displays the tradition is “Open Thy Lattice Love” (1844), the first published song of Stephen Foster, whose assortment of songs gives a brief of “sublimated chivalry.”8

Open thy lattice, love listen to me!

The cool balmy breeze is abroad on the sea!

The moon like a queen, roams her realms of blue, And the stars keep their vigils in heaven for you. Ere morn’s gushing light tips the hills with its ray, Away o’er the waters away and away!

Then open thy lattice, love listen to me!

While the moon’s in the sky and the breeze on the sea!

In the Philippines, Lourdes Quisumbing notes that the *harana* was one of the ways a man could attract the attention of the woman he admires aside from reciting love verses to her.9 She states that “the real *harana* is sung in verse to the accompaniment of the guitar (*sista*).10 There is a wealth of lyrical beauty, appreciation for nature, and depth of sentiment contained in the love songs.”11 The man woos a woman beneath her window at night by singing and playing his guitar. If the man is not a good singer, he will usually bring someone who can do it for him. Some men also invite their close friends to join in the singing or to provide accompaniment with the guitar if he is singing.12

Early Cebuano *haranas* recorded are found in Fernando Buyser’s collection *Awit sa Kabukiran*.13

*Ang imong kahamili* Your nobility

*Ingon sa Rosal nga maamyon* Is like a fragrant Rosal

*Bulak ko nga pinili* My chosen flower

*Natimban sa katahom* Full of loveliness

*Nagadapit sa kalipay* Inviting happiness

*Ning pobre nga masulub-on* For this poor melancholy man

*Nga nanag-awit sa maming*aw Who sings in lonely tones

*Sa pagdayeg sa imong kamahal*. Praise of your pricelessness.

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*Jazmin preciosa* Precious jasmine

*Ning kasingkasing* Of this heart

*Nga ginapaniba sa kalanggaman* Supped by the birds

*Ginadugok kay bulak nga mahumot* Whose fragrance attracts many

*Uban sa hinuyuhoy* Wafted by the breeze

*Ning tun-og sa kagabhion* In the cool night.

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*Ikaw man mao ang bulak* For you are the blossom

*Nga gihatag sa Providencia* Offered by Providence

*Nakalingaw niining conciencia* That lightens this conscience

*Nakalipay ning nagahilak* Brings joy to one who is tearful

*Ipakita ang imong kagayon* Show the breadth

*Sa imong pagkamalipayon* Of your happiness

*Ning oras nga himalatyon* In this dying hour

*Ning makuli kong pagkabutang*. In my difficult state.

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*Sa imong bintana* From your window

*Tamboi sa madali* Look down a moment

*Oh! Venus astro* Oh! Astral Venus

*Ning kasingkasing* Of my heart

*Ipakita Diosa* Show, goddess,

*Ang imong kapawa* Your brilliance

*Niining mangitngit* To this beclouded

*Nga hunahuna.* Mind.

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*Mahal nga mutya sa Oriente* Precious pearl of the Orient

*Nga sa kaanyag ikaw nabantog* Renowned for beauty

*Kang Venus, Jupiter ug Marte* With Venus, Jupiter and Mars

*Sa kahayag ka nakig-ilog* You vie in brightness

*Tamda ug patalinghugi* Heed and hear

*Kining nagtuaw nga masulub-on* One who cries in sadness

*Itunol Diosa, itunol Diosa* Goddess, hand over

*Ang lunsay mo karong kagayon.* Your pure joy.

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*Ayaw ikasakit* Don’t be pained

*Ug ikabudlay* And don’t be troubled

*Kining nagbakho* Over one who weeps

*Ug nagpanghayhay* And sighs

*Sa pasaylo hatagi* Rather, bestow your pardon

*Kining mapasipala* To one who has sinned

*Adios prenda querida* Goodbye, my pledged beloved

*Sa kasingkasing ko ikaw gidala.* I carry you in my heart.14

Florante Aguilar writes that *harana* is very distinct as it has its own style – “the rhythm is

*danza* which is in 2/4 time.”15

During the *harana* performance which is often favorably done on moonlit nights, curiosity is exhibited as to who is serenading and is serenaded. Family members and neighbors will be interested. Feigning nonchalance, a woman is usually elated at being serenaded, claims Quisumbing, especially when the song is dedicated to her.16

Some parents do not interfere; they may even invite the serenaders to come in to sing their songs and partake of the food and drinks prepared for them. But the majority show indifference or displeasure, while some are vocal in their disapproval, angrily tell the serenaders to stop.17

Usually, the next day, the woman becomes the object of teasing among her family members, even relatives. But if she happens to be a visitor from another part of the country, then from her friends and from her hosts. There are instances when the harana becomes the talk of the town especially when something odd happens like if poultry is missing or if *haranistas* were unjustifiably welcomed with a chamberpot of piss poured out of the window.

As in the preceding examples given, the *harana* has a formula. Three parts are evident: *pagtawag* (call out), *pagtug-an* or *pagsugid* (confession) and *pagtubag* (reply). In *pagtawag*, this is the stage where men are outside beneath the woman’s window announcing their presence. It comes with a specific set of songs. These songs usually place the men in the act of serenading from the outside, politely imploring the woman to open the window and listen to the song. Consider the following examples:

Harana I

Yo te saludo I salute thee,

Putli nga bulak, O pure flower!

Mujer hermosa Beautiful maiden,

Humilde flor; In thy bower.

Ay! Yo soy indigno I am unworthy

Niña preciosa Of thee, jasmin sweet,

Jazming biyuos E’en to kiss thy feet.

Nga makawiwili. List to my pleading

Sulnga ra Pulana And to my tears, imploring

Kining nagsangpit Thy pity. Give thy hand

Ug patalinghugi To this wretched one

Ang mga kasakit Who knows no joy,

Walay kalipay But is full of sorrow

Kining makalolooy. Until loved by you.18

In the first four lines, you have the *pagtawag*. Most opening lines describe the beauty of a woman and she is likened to a flower or a star in the sky. She is the prettiest thing the young man has ever seen. The sun, the moon and the stars are favorite devices in the depiction of the lady’s beauty. It is also possible for her to compete with the flower and to exceed it in terms of fragrance and beauty. Consider this next *harana*:

Harana VI

Oh! Clavel cang maamyon Oh! Thou art

Nga ginamasitas Carnation sweet!

Niining tanaman In the garden of my heart

Cong macawiwili Thou growest apart;

Ug ang caambong mo Thy fragrance surpasses

Minglabaw sa rosas, That of the roses,

Icaw mao ang himaya Thou art the glory

Niining miserable. That hides my mis’ry.

Icaw mao ang bituon Thou art the star

Nga labing masulaw That, with brightest light

Nga nagahayag Shines in the night

Niining dughan; Of my bosom dark;

Cong mangitngit Dark clouds anpve

Apan cay ginadulman O’ershadow my love.

Ang gugmang masilaw Thus my heart in tears

Busa ang dughan co will reckon with the years. Nagbakho sa camingaw.

Apan, Señorita But, dearest maiden

Imo aco pasayran Tell me truly –

Mahatungud ning gugma This love unbidden

Naging masulub-on Has made me lonely

Cong wala na bay “justicia” If there be justice

Mao na ba lamang In this my fate

Ang mapait nga camatayon. Which is worse than death.

Wala nay fuerza All drained is the strength

Ning adorador mo Of this who adores thee

Kong ang camatayon And when at length

Maoy magbawi Death beckons me

Maculi nga icahatag Vain and useless to me

Ang calag ug kinabuhi. Will my soul and life be.

Notice that in the first two lines, the *pagtawag* compares the woman’s beauty is likened to a carnation which fragrance surpasses that of the rose. The succeeding lines in the first including that of the fourth stanza constitute the *pagtug-an* or *pagsugid* (confession). In *pagtug- an* or *pagsugid*, the man successfully awakens the woman’s interest. Usually the woman opens the window and invites the man into the house. In the living room, usually with a chaperone if the parents are not around, another round of singing follows. The man confidently declares his veneration of the woman’s virtues and beauty.

If the woman being serenaded will reply, it will also be in a song form. This constitutes the *pagtubag* (response). In some areas like Cavite, women are known to give a response. Aguilar records this

The haranistas in Maragondon, Cavite introduced me to an elder lady known for her singing during serenades. When I asked her which song she would respond with, she said “*It depends. If I like the fellow, there are some songs for that. If I am not that interested or if I am unsure, it’s a whole different set of songs”*.19

When unsure, the choice could be Constancio de Guzman’s *Ang Tangi Kong Pagibig* (My Only True Love), a song where the first line declares *“Ang tangi kong pagibig ay minsan lamang”* (True love for me is rare). When affirmative, the song could be *Maala-ala Mo Kaya* by the same composer, a joyous song that declares *O kay sarap mabuhay, lalo na’t may lambingan* (Oh how sweet it is to live, more so in the presence of love and affection).20

When a *haranista* is rejected, he could sing a song to plead his case further. Some of these songs are titled “*Kay Hirap Mawalay sa Piling* (How Painful to be Away from You),

*Ako’y Isa Na Ngayong Sawi* (I am Now Brokenhearted), *Pusong Wasak* (Shredded Heart) and my favorite *Laot Ng Dusa* (Open Sea of Suffering).”21

The *harana* shows the custom of the day. It presents the composers’ ideas of how men and women are to interact, ideas which were circulated among the members of the community. The practice of courtship created by the serenade elevates its performers by mimicking the knightly approach to courting a woman then using the formula of allusions to words from the earlier tradition.

The concept of ennobled courtship invoked by the lyrics and music tended to intensify the different position of the sexes . . . though popular songs progressively suggested greater limitations on the influence and freedom of women to act in the outside world, they also endowed women with an innate superiority (expressed literally in serenades) and moral authority.22

In the Philippines, suitors were not knights on horses coming to serenade damsels after battle. Men dealt with women openly. As barrio beauties who opened their windows and listened to the songs of love, Filipinas participated in night romances and engaged in the world outside their homes. An undercurrent of energy and excitement runs through the *harana* and offers possibility in the new style that is accessible and endures in the songs towards the last half of the twenty-first century.

# The Beloved

The *harana* increasingly pressed into a vogue of songs about the beloved and composed songs continued in this vein until the trend mellowed down towards the turn of the twenty-first century. The lyrics spend most of their energy in praise of the beloved, usually named as in the example of Olivia by Cengo Arias and Carmen by Max Surban, and

invoke high speech accordingly. More than this, the style imparts a sense of immediacy to courtship: the man in the song demands a response so that he can proceed further

# Olivia Olivia

Dawata na Olivia Olivia please receive

Ang gugma kong gihalad This love I give

Balaanon nga gugma Love divine

Ug dili molubad. And will not disappear.

Refrain: Refrain:

Pagkatahum Olivia How beautiful Olivia

Katahum mong sud-ongon How beautiful you look

Daw sama ka sa Diosa Like a goddess

Maayong hagwaon. That is teasing.

Pagkabulahan ko kaha How fortunate I will be

Kon buligan ni Bathala If Bathala helps me

Unya dawaton mo And if you accept

kining gugmang gihalad ko This love that will not fade

nga walay pagluib. That I offer. (Repeat refrain)

# Carmela Carmela

Carmela dungga kining nagsangpit Carmela listen to me who calls

you

kay dad-on ko ikaw For I will take you

sa himayang dayon To heavenly bliss

Sa akong pagmata nakita ko When I awoke I saw

Ang langitnong sidlak sa bitoon The heavenly light of the star Sama sa imong larawan Like your picture

Ang kaanyag mo walay sama, ay! Your beauty’s no compare, ay!

Carmela unsay akong mahimo Carmela what can I do

sa gugmang pagbati with this love I feel

ikaw ang natingban You are all

Timan-i, kutob karon timan-i, Remember, until now remember,

nga kining tanan, tanan matuman. That all these will come to be.

Carmela dungga kining nagsangpit Carmela listen to me who calls

you

kay dad-on ko ikaw For I will take you

sa himayang dayon. To heavenly bliss.

In the *harana* by Celestino de Gracia entitled “Carmencita,” the suitor pleads for his beloved to accept his love and to refrain from making him suffer. All he needs to live through the day is a picture of her.

Carmencita, dawata na ang gugma ko! Carmencita, ayaw ako paantusa Kaloy-a ako intawon

Pangandoy ko sa adlaw'ng tanan Ang imong larawan.

Like the lover in Max Surban’s *harana* who promises his beloved heavenly bliss, the suitor here proposes to take care of her forever until death with a love that’s true after alluding to her pity:

Carmencita, ihatag na ang kaluoy mo Carmencita, ayaw ako'g pahilaka Kaloy-a ako! Kaloy-a!

Dawata na kining gugma ko, O akong pinangga.

Ikaw unungan ko gayud

Pangga-on hangtud sa lubnganan Ihatag ko gugma'ng tinu-od Akong unungan ug pakamatyan!

Just as the text mixes elevated language with plain speech, the music retains elements of the

*danza* in the melodic lines.

# Angelic Women

*Haranas* about the purity of a woman suggest that even when women are no longer kept closeted in the home, their roles remain strictly defined – they must remain shining

examples, of having angelic or heavenly attributes. This is proposed in the harana by Emil Loseñada entitled “Ikaduhang Bathala” demonstrating how a woman is viewed as a goddess who is entreated to pity the poor suitor’s heart.

# Ikaduhang Bathala

Gikatug-an ko na kanimo ang tanan Nahigugma ako ug nga kanimo lang Inay sagupon mo kining gibati ko Mipahiyum ka lang ug mipahilayo Kon daw sa kasingkasing mo

May dapit man ako

Pakitaag kahayag ang mga panag-um ko Limsi’g pagbati limsi’g kaluoy

Nga makagpahid sa mga luha ko II

Kon ugaling sa gugma mo May katahap ka man

Wad-a sa panumduman mo Wad-a na ang tanan

Ayaw kalimot, ayaw pinangga Ikaduha ko ikaw nga bathala.

The woman is adored as being second God. She is put on a pedestal. In the succeeding *harana* found in one of Buenaventura Rodriguez’s sarsuela *Ang Mini*, he wrote a song given melody by Dionisio Jakosalem. Limited to their undefiled private world, women exert power over the public domain of men by projecting the values of kindness and temperance.

# Harana

Ani-ay nagtuaw sa imong silong Nangitag buligan sa imong kalooy Ayaw, Inday, tamaya

Ayaw siya’g isalikway. Nagpakilimos siya sa imong kalooy.

Midag-um ang langit ug mangitngit na, Mitago ang bulan sa panganud,

Kay siya nasina

kay siya nasina sa imong kaanyag Kay ikaw labaw man ug kaanindot.

The separation between the domains of men and women intensified the fantasy of the beloved so love becomes a mystery that allows a lover to sacrifice all. Fernando Alfon’s harana is given melody by Ismael Villareal in Kahibulungan.

# Kahibulungan

Kahibulungan ang gibati ko Natawo ang gugmang makabuang Kanimo pinangga ko

Ani-a intawon ako ning mabugnaw'ng gabii Binuksan kining dughan aron ka makasaksi Nga dinhi sa ilawom sa langit

Ang gugma ko imo da Kahibulungan ang gibati ko Natawo ang gugmang makabuang Kanimo pinangga ko

Ania intawon ako ning mabugnaw'ng gabii Binuksan kining dughan aron ka makasaksi Nga dinhi sa ilawom sa langit

Ang gugma ko imo da Ang gugma ko imo da

Since the 1980s the *harana* lost its popularity for a host of reasons. In the rural areas, electric power gave way to television and the introduction of latest songs available from Manila and abroad that were no longer traditional. The disco had paved the way for the demise of the practice of the *harana*.

Martial Law was also imposed bringing the curfew to ban the nightly *harana*. Men were no longer encouraged to woo late at night. Courtship mores modernized to allow meetings in places outside the home which used to be the only place where young ladies could entertain suitors under the watchful eyes of parents or relative chaperones. Moreover, most Filipinos have acquired Western tastes that the local traditions have been relegated to the occasional performances in school programs or cultural programs at most.

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