

## THE PHILIPPINE *RONDALLA*: A GIFT OF MUSICAL HERITAGE IN A MIGRANT CONTEXT

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### ABSTRACT<sup>2</sup>

*This paper reports on two recently developed contemporary rondallas outside the Philippines: one in Dansui, Taiwan and another in Queensland, Australia. The rondalla is a plucked-string ensemble which was brought to the Philippines from Spain in the late nineteenth century, not long before American intervention and the end of the Spanish era. This type of instrumental group was enthusiastically adopted in the Philippines and became an inexpensive and accessible medium for music education in schools. It has also become strongly connected to notions of Philippine national identity. Enjoying periodic resurgences within the Philippines, the characteristic, sparkling tremolo sound of rondalla instruments has an enduring place in the Philippine musical soundscape. This examination of rondallas in two diasporic locations confirms that the key concern for group founders is the transmission of culture of origin to second-generation Filipino migrants. In spite of a lack of funds and the scarcity of rondalla teachers, Filipinos have been able to reconstruct a treasured, musical heritage in their new homes. The paper also highlights the interesting contrast between the specific forms of multiculturalism which have arisen in Taiwan and Australia over the last few decades and have influenced the development of rondallas in each location. Recommendations for the rondalla's further development are offered, including the establishment of a freely downloadable database of scores and the creation of accessible educational multi-media materials for rondalla.*

**Keywords:** Hispanic influence in Asia, multiculturalism, plucked-strings, migrant music in Taiwan, musical heritage preservation

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## INTRODUCTION

This article examines the activity of two fledgling *rondallas* (plucked-string orchestras) established by groups of Filipino migrants in Taiwan and Australia respectively. At the same time it adds to current knowledge about music in diaspora, and the music of immigrant enclaves, an area which has been a "major thrust of ethnomusicological endeavour"<sup>3</sup> and one in which researchers continue to find hitherto unexplored areas for academic enquiry.<sup>4</sup>

There has to date been "insufficient research"<sup>5</sup> and a general paucity of scholarly writing on the *rondalla* from a purely musicological perspective.<sup>6</sup> Examining these musical groups helps to rectify this situation, while at the same time strengthening the understanding that the arts are "not merely passive reflections of a community but rather an active and adaptive force that makes the arts a key element in migration studies."<sup>7</sup> The struggle of migrants to create musical ensembles in new environments is at once humbling and inspiring and a testament to their musical ingenuity. For groups living far from their homeland, musical practice becomes "one of the most effective ways by which groups negotiate their new identities at the crossroads of various cultural influences."<sup>8</sup> Bohlman has emphasised that in the United States the "stakes in the struggle for identity are enormous"<sup>9</sup> for diasporic arts groups. This is certainly no less true in the increasingly multicultural societies of the Asia-Pacific.

A valuable opportunity also arises here to examine two such contrasting multicultural societies in which *rondallas* have recently been developed. The focus on Taiwan and Australia helps to draw attention to the variety of country-specific situations not immediately evoked by the blanket use of the term multiculturalism and illustrates how diasporic

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<sup>3</sup> Nettl, B., *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 334.

<sup>4</sup> Slobin, M., "The Destiny Of 'Diaspora' in Ethnomusicology," in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Clayton, M., Herbert, T. and Middleton, R. (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), 106.

<sup>5</sup> Peters, J., "The Ethos and Rationale for the Development of the Singapore-Vietnam Bandoria, and Its Relationship to the Spanish Bandurria, the Filipino Banduria, and Other Related Tremolo Instruments," *Plucked String Music: Tradition, Change and New Directions* Festival, Tagum City, Philippines, February 2011, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Rockell, K., "The Philippine Rondalla: Recreating Musical Heritage in Contemporary Australasia," PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 2012, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, L., DeMeo, B. and Widmann, S., "Identity, Migration, and the Arts: Three Case Studies of Translocal Communities," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 41 (2011): 187.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Bohlman, P. V., "Identity and the Arts in Diaspora Communities," *Music & Letters* 88, no. 1 (2007): 186.

subjects can be placed into a problematic category of difference within societies described as multicultural.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the Filipino diaspora, song and dance is enthusiastically practised, but performance on Filipino traditional instruments is less common. In Australia and Taiwan, however, in addition to *rondallas*, performances incorporating *anklung* (pitched bamboo tubes attached to a frame) into large groups and *gangsa* (unbossed gongs from the Cordillera region of the Northern Philippines)<sup>11</sup> can be identified. The study of smaller migrant instrumental ensembles such as the *rondalla*, which do not necessarily represent a widespread or prominent musical phenomenon in the Asia-Pacific region, nevertheless presents ethnomusicologists with an area of intrinsically valuable inquiry and reveals much about music in a migrant context. It is also true that "all musics are capable of imparting much of importance to the peoples to whom they belong, and to the world, and thus naturally to the scholars who study them."<sup>12</sup> In the following section, general information about the Philippine *rondalla* and its instruments are presented.

## THE RONDALLA AND ITS INSTRUMENTS

The Philippine *rondalla* is of Hispanic origin and its diffusion to South-East Asia finds it repositioned in a region where plucked-stringed instruments are frequently an important ensemble component. Like the *sitar* and in Hindustani music,<sup>13</sup> and the *koto* in the Japanese, courtly music *gagaku* (雅楽),<sup>14</sup> plucked-stringed instruments have remained an integral part of a number of Asian, classical music traditions. In the West, however, for several centuries, plucked-string instruments have, tended to fall under the ambit of popular music.<sup>15</sup>

In a pre-contact or pre-Hispanic Philippine context, instrumental music was frequently integral to ritual, and organically coupled with the performance of song and dance.<sup>16</sup> While a rich array of bamboo instruments, gongs, percussive idiophones and drums were played

<sup>10</sup> Ramnarine, T. K., "Musical Performance in the Diaspora: Introduction," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 16, no. 1 (2007): 2.

<sup>11</sup> Rockell, K., fieldwork observation, Wellington, New Zealand, 23–25 October 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts*, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Dick, A., "Sitar," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, ed. Sadie, S., 392–400 (New York: Macmillan, 1984).

<sup>14</sup> Adriaansz, W., "Koto," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, ed. Sadie, S. (New York: Macmillan, 1984).

<sup>15</sup> Leaving aside here the important work of Spaniard, Andres Segovia in re-establishing a classical guitar tradition in the twentieth century, and the place of plucked chordophones in the seventeenth-century English broken consort.

<sup>16</sup> Rockell, K., "'Fiesta,' Affirming Cultural Identity in a Changing Society: A Study of Filipino Music in Christchurch, 2008," M.A. thesis, Univeristy of Canterbury, 2009, 13.

throughout the archipelago,<sup>17</sup> plucked-string instruments such as the *kudyapi* or Philippine boat lute, appear to have been less widely diffused and are found predominantly in the south.<sup>18</sup> Hispanic chordophones, on the other hand, found throughout the world wherever the Spanish or Portuguese have spread their influence, began to be brought to the Philippines from the earliest stages of colonial encounter.<sup>19</sup> Since, as a geopolitical entity, the Philippines can be considered to have been originally a Spanish construct, the search for a nationally representative music leads directly to the *rondalla*.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 1: Full Set of *Rondalla* Instruments Including Bass, Guitar, *Laud*, *Octavina* and *Bandurria* (Courtesy of Rondanihan, Canberra).

This ensemble, made up of *bandurya*, *laud*, *octavina*, *gitara* and *baho* (the Philippine versions of the *bandurria*, *laúd*, *octavilla*, *guitarra* and *bajo*) is, in its original context, strongly linked to folk music and dance.<sup>21</sup>

The *bandurria* especially is considered by some Spaniards to be *populachera* (vulgar, common or rabble rousing) in Spain.<sup>22</sup> This instrument is small, pear-shaped and with double courses of metal strings (triple-course trebles in the case of the Philippine instrument), plucked with a plectrum and frequently employs sustained tremolo. In the colonial

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 38–39.

<sup>18</sup> Pfeiffer, W., *Indigenous, Folk, Modern Filipino Music* (Dumagete City: Silliman Music Foundation, 1976), 62.

<sup>19</sup> Rockell, K. "'Fiesta,' Affirming Cultural Identity in a Changing Society: A Study of Filipino Music in Christchurch, 2008," 16.

<sup>20</sup> Pfeiffer, W., *Indigenous, Folk, Modern Filipino Music*, 148.

<sup>21</sup> Navarro, A. and Rey, J. J., *Los Instrumentos De Púa En Espana. Bandurria, Citola Y "Laudes Españoles"* (Madrid: Alianza, 1993), 117.

<sup>22</sup> Llopis, A. P., *La Rondalla Española* (Biblioteca Nacional De España, 1984), 54.

Philippines, while still retaining an important link to folklore, the *rondalla* also became associated with the social elite.<sup>23</sup> With peninsular Spaniards in an ascendant position in the social hierarchy, even *populachera* cultural expressions were given high value and their status inverted, while, at the same time, pre-Hispanic or pre-contact indigenous musical practice was dissuaded in the process of Christianisation.<sup>24</sup>

In a number of post-colonial, Hispanic societies, such as Cuba, Puerto Rico and Mexico, plucked-chordophones of Hispanic origin have come to be considered national symbols. This is also the case in the Philippines. A comment about the *bandurria* by prominent, Philippine *rondalla* maestro Celso Espejo illustrates this thinking. According to Espejo, this instrument, the primary melodic instrument of the *rondalla*, is "a valued legacy of our forefathers. It is a mark of Filipino ingenuity and an emblem of the musical culture of a nation."<sup>25</sup> While the *rondalla*'s longevity in the Philippine islands make the ensemble a valued part of the Filipino cultural heritage, its survival into the twenty-first century results from its place in the Philippine education system. Especially during the 1960s and 70s many schools cultivated *rondallas*.<sup>26</sup>

The sense of hearing is less easily shut off like that of sight, constantly informed by the sonic surroundings. Thus, even students who were not directly involved in the Philippines became aware of the *rondalla* and it became a part of their childhood musical memoirs. Individuals carry within them "the experience of a unique sound environment, and many different kinds of musical memories."<sup>27</sup> Contemporary communications technology too, intensifies music's intrinsic fluidity and de-localises musical expressions. At the same time, music appreciation is an increasingly private experience. Listening devices such as the I-pod, the Internet and improved soundproofing in buildings facilitate an interaction between performer and listener which is emancipated from temporal and spatial concerns but totally reliant on technology. While musical sound can now so easily be enjoyed privately, it is at once a universal human patrimony and, at the same time, a marker of group identity. Thus, *rondalla*

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<sup>23</sup> Pujol, D. C., "República De Filipinas," in *Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana*, ed. Rodicio, E. C. (Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores (SGAE) and Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música (INAEM) del Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte de España, 2002), 118.

<sup>24</sup> Rockell, K., "'Fiesta', Affirming Cultural Identity in a Changing Society: A Study of Filipino Music in Christchurch, 2008," 40.

<sup>25</sup> Aning, J., "Rondalla Maestro Makes Strong Pitch for Banduria," *Inquirer.net* no. 23, November 2007, [http://showbizandstyle.inquirer.net/entertainment/entertainment/view/20071123-102634/Rondalla\\_maestro\\_makes\\_strong\\_pitch\\_for\\_banduria](http://showbizandstyle.inquirer.net/entertainment/entertainment/view/20071123-102634/Rondalla_maestro_makes_strong_pitch_for_banduria).

<sup>26</sup> Calubayan, R. R., "Development and Evaluation of a Manual for a School Rondalla" (Philippine Normal University, 2000), 3.

<sup>27</sup> Rockell, K., "'Fiesta,' Affirming Cultural Identity in a Changing Society: A Study of Filipino Music in Christchurch, 2008," 10.

music moves along with the Philippine diaspora and becomes a treasured part of a remembered sound world and a kind of intangible cultural heritage.

As we move in the present, the past is constantly with us, in monuments, street names, the names of persons and places, our myths, legends, folk tales and stories, in the music that is publically broadcast or taught, and in language itself. A migrant in a new environment faces not only the burden of the present and adjustment to a new environment but the ever looming past, a past that not his or her past and which affirms the other rather than the self. It is debatable whether responsible and enthusiastic participation in a contemporary, multicultural society should also demand the taking on of another past, another history and another remembered world. In the absence of a personal, musical past affirmed in the present, it is perhaps natural that musical memories become so important to migrants.

Outside the Philippines, a number of *rondallas* have been developed in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>28</sup> In addition to five *rondallas* in Australia and one in New Zealand, the Carmen Matsushima *Rondalla*, which was first established in Nara, Japan, has a membership of Japanese ladies, taught by Ms. Matsushima herself.<sup>29</sup> A *rondalla* at the National University of Singapore founded by Dr. Joseph Peters is currently made up primarily of students from China.<sup>30</sup> Although the groups in Japan and Singapore act as ambassadors for Philippine music, they are not directly concerned with the transmission of cultural heritage to Filipinos in particular. In Taiwan and Australia however, the transmission of cultural heritage to second-generation, Philippine migrants is the strongest motivation behind the development of *rondallas*. The following sections introduce two of these ensembles, and briefly sketch the multicultural societies in which they have come to be formed.

## **TWO RONDALLAS: TAIWAN AND AUSTRALIA**

### **Multicultural Taiwan**

Whilst an overview of Taiwan's history clearly demonstrates the presence of a diverse range of cultures over centuries, multiculturalism, as an ideology or state sponsored policy, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Chun, however, is careful to distinguish the concept and practice of

<sup>28</sup> ———, "The Philippine Rondalla: Recreating Musical Heritage in Contemporary Australasia," 179–207.

<sup>29</sup> Matsushima, C., email to the author, 2 June 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Rockell, K., "Fieldwork Report," *NZASIA Newsletter*, no. 22 (2011), <http://www.nzasia.org.nz/downloads/newsletter22.pdf>.

multiculturalism in Taiwan from "some inherently universal embrace of worldly values"<sup>31</sup> which "denote[s] equality for ethnic minorities" as the term might be understood in a Western context or postcolonial setting.<sup>32</sup>

This researcher was able to visit Taiwan in December 2010, staying in a small town half way between Xindian, where it was possible to access the recently developed metro and Wulai, home to Taiwanese aboriginals of the Atayal tribe. Taiwan's multicultural model appeared to be sino-centric and privilege speakers of Taiwanese, Mandarin and Hakka. Hakka language and culture, in particular, was enjoying a renaissance. The impression gained was far from that of Chen Shui-bian's expansive vision of "Fulo, Hakka, Western culture from Netherlands and Spain, Japanese culture, Chinese culture from the mainland, American and European culture and, finally the South East Asian culture of immigrant workers," all contributing their part to a beautiful, Taiwanese symphony.<sup>33</sup>

Taiwanese multiculturalism is viewed by Chun as an inward-looking process which seeks to constructively integrate the elements already present within Taiwanese society.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, balancing the concerns of the various Taiwanese Aboriginal and Chinese groups can be no easy task. With the Kuomintang's (KMT's) continued political mandate affirmed with the re-election of Ma Ying-jeou of the on 14 January 2012, the way in which the continued trajectory of this party's hierarchical model of mainstream, tributary and minority culture translates into evolving social projects and policy will be interesting to observe.<sup>35</sup>

From an overview of Taiwanese society, the importance of the "four ethnic groups" seems self-evident. Nevertheless, as Wang points out, the reality of multiculturalism is far more complex and problematised by notions of "cultural hybridity" and "multiple identities."<sup>36</sup> With a focus on re-calibrating the pre-existing elements within Taiwanese society, it is perhaps not surprising that the position of minorities such as South-East Asian migrant workers, foreign spouses of Taiwanese men, their children and the children of cross cultural marriages are overlooked. Chun reports on the "marginal existence" of these individuals, and points to a Taiwanese multiculturalism that "does not include outsiders ('foreigners') or makes no attempt to absorb foreign labor in a way that is by nature blind to ethnicity".<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Chun, A., "The Coming Crisis of Multiculturalism in Transnational Taiwan," *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Cultural and Social Practice* 46, no. 2 (2002): 3.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Wang, L., "Multiculturalism in Taiwan," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 10, no. 3 (2004): 325-326.

<sup>34</sup> Chun, "The Coming Crisis of Multiculturalism in Transnational Taiwan."

<sup>35</sup> Wang, "Multiculturalism in Taiwan," 305.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 303.

<sup>37</sup> Chun, "The Coming Crisis of Multiculturalism in Transnational Taiwan."

Underlying the presentation of the *Fatima Rondalla* in this article is a concern that for such vulnerable individuals who fall outside the current model for multicultural Taiwan. If Taiwanese aboriginals and Hakka experience "invisibility" and disproportion representation in Taiwan, how much more so do Filipino migrants.<sup>38</sup> The position of Filipino migrants within Taiwanese society and the way they, and other migrant workers, fit musically in to Taiwanese society, are of particular interest to this researcher.

Although music from around the world was being performed in Taipei in 2010, and the researcher encountered Japanese *shakuhachi*, American, popular songs with keyboard accompaniment, and a performance of Hispanic music at the Taiwan National University College of Humanities,<sup>39</sup> in each of these cases the performers were Taiwanese. This music making fell in to the category of "cultural sampling"<sup>40</sup> and was not part of multicultural, migrant, musical expression. As will be seen, however, those organising *rondallas* in Taiwan are less concerned with "display" or representation but rather with the psychological and emotional wellbeing of the Filipino or Filipino Taiwanese children in Taiwan, believing that direct participation in heritage activities engenders a tangible sense of pride and self-worth.

American, European and South African musicians resident in Taiwan are also active in performing American, popular music and jazz. Live music venues and discos aimed specifically at Filipino migrant workers exist and are well supported by migrants. At a public level, however, apart from the annual International Migrants Day, organised by the National Immigrant Agency,<sup>41</sup> migrant workers from developing countries appear to have no significant voice, and half Filipino children and the children of Filipino migrants even less so.

For transplanted individuals, memoirs of traditional music and folkdance become valued treasures imbued with deep personal significance. This feeling is intensified in the case of traditions such as the *rondalla* that are seen to be dying in the country of origin. Emilia Lu, who arrived in Taiwan in 1999, recalls that during her childhood in the rural Philippines the guitar and the *rondalla* were popular activities. On a recent return trip to her home town she sought out the local *rondalla* but was saddened to learn that its members had already passed away.<sup>42</sup> These kinds of experiences make the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage to

<sup>38</sup> Wang, "Multiculturalism in Taiwan," 310.

<sup>39</sup> Thanks to the kind invitation of Dr. Wang Ying-fen of the Graduate Institute of Musicology, Taiwan National University.

<sup>40</sup> Rockell, "The Philippine Rondalla: Recreating Musical Heritage in Contemporary Australasia", 457.

<sup>41</sup> Tang, H-i, "International Migrants Day Attracts Thousands," *The China Post*, 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Openshaw, T., "Rondalla in Taiwan," 2010. Ms Lu is married to a Taiwanese man with whom she has three children.



second generation migrant Filipinos, a key concern for some migrant parents.

This problem is being addressed as the personal initiative of Mary Luzvimanda Tsai, a long term migrant to Taiwan who arrived from the Philippines in 1970. Mrs. Tsai and her Taiwanese husband are active members of the Fatima Catholic Church community and have been engaged in voluntary work through their church for twelve years. Within the membership of the Fatima Church are a large number of OFWs or overseas Filipino workers, as well as Filipina women married to Taiwanese men. As a long term migrant, Mrs. Tsai has earned the respect of many new migrants to Taiwan from the Philippines and is affectionately referred to as "Mummy Luz." Her husband James, who the Filipinos call "Daddy," is realistic about the challenges of a cross-cultural marriage:

My wife is Filipina and I'm Taiwanese. So the background, the culture is really very hard ... My wife and I have known each other for thirty-five years so for us it's no problem. But now the younger generation here, I tell them, "If you have any problem let us know, so I can tell you through the experience." So now we have many new, young generations coming. I always tell them [the Filipina migrants] "Why don't you bring your husband here then we can talk!"<sup>43</sup>



Figure 2: Mrs. and Mr. Tsai with the Researcher (Centre) at Fatima Church, Danshui, Taiwan (Photo Courtesy of Tobie Openshaw).

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

The Tsais' concern for the welfare of the Filipino community in Taiwan extends to the children of migrants and their partners. Mrs. Tsai confided that some migrants, especially those coming from particularly difficult economic circumstances, do not always have positive memories of their culture of origin. There are also parents of half-Filipino children who "don't know anything good about Philippine culture and don't want to share it to the children." Mrs. Tsai, on the other hand, values the cultural heritage she was exposed to while growing up in the Philippines, and has thought about how best to transmit it to young Filipino-Taiwanese. She not only believes that a positive affirmation of identity through cultural activity will be of great benefit to the children psychologically as they grow older, but that it is a necessity for second generation migrants to learn about the cultural heritage of a parent born abroad.

Mrs. Tsai considers that the best way to teach Filipino-Taiwanese youth about the Philippines is through music and, in particular, the *rondalla*.<sup>44</sup>



Figure 3: Fatima Rondalla Performs at International Migrants Day, Taiwan (Photo Courtesy of Fatima Rondalla).

<sup>44</sup> As mentioned earlier, this type of ensemble was an important vehicle for music education in Philippine schools at various times during the twentieth century and its music, live or recorded, frequently accompanies a large number of Philippine folk dances. As a result, many Filipinos, even those that did not actually participate in *rondalla* during their school days, have come into contact with this ensemble and its music.

### Establishing Ensemble: The Fatima *Rondalla* in Danshui

Mrs. Tsai first conceived the idea of starting a children's *rondalla* in Taiwan in around 2005. She gauged the reaction of the parents of Taiwanese-Filipino children to the idea and found that many parents, such as Mr. and Mrs. Lu who saw *rondalla* as an excellent musical opportunity for their children, were supportive. In contrast to her memories of the Philippines, where she says many people love learning to play music from an early age, Mrs. Lu did not consider that her children's musical experiences in Taiwan had been particularly positive until they joined the Fatima *Rondalla*.<sup>45</sup> At the beginning, the main difficulty faced by the Fatima *Rondalla* was that of acquiring instruments. Although Philippine *rondalla* instruments are relatively inexpensive, at about 1,500 Pesos (1,042 Taiwanese dollars) per unit, they are not available in Taiwan, so a set needed to be brought from the Philippines. Mr Tsai was aware of the potential difficulties this process might involve and encouraged his wife to seek external support. Fortunately, the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) were able to offer initial assistance in transporting the instruments from the Philippines to Taiwan.<sup>46</sup> This kind of support falls within MECO's mandate to promote cultural cooperation, in addition to the important areas of trade, investment, tourism, labour and science. MECO, the Philippines' representative office in Taiwan, was established in 1975 and is "organised as a non-profit and non-stock private corporation under Philippine law."<sup>47</sup> During the researcher's visit to Taiwan in December 2010 it was possible to meet with the MECO representative Reydeluz D. Conferido, who confirmed MECO's broad mandate in supporting the activities of Philippine migrants in Taiwan.

Unfortunately, Mr. Tsai recalls, the instruments for the Fatima *Rondalla* were handled roughly in transit and at least six instruments were found to be damaged on arrival. He was, however, able to conduct makeshift repairs using Coca-Cola cans. The cans in which beverages such as Coca-Cola are sold are made of malleable materials like aluminium or tin-plated steel and they are an inexpensive and readily available resource for instrumental repairs. During the very first rehearsals when, although most children appeared eager to learn about *rondalla*, some initially had no idea what the instruments were, and even tried to break them, this approach was very helpful.<sup>48</sup>

Children were allowed to freely choose which particular *rondalla* instrument they would play. One student named Jenny opted for a lyre (a

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<sup>45</sup> Openshaw, "Rondalla in Taiwan."

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> PH Meco, P. H., "Manila Economic and Cultural Office," Meco PH.

<sup>48</sup> Tsai, J., conversation with the author, Danshui, Taiwan, 18 December 2010.

kind of xylophone set in a frame shaped like an ancient lyre) rather than one of the plucked-stringed instruments. In fact, the incorporation of auxiliary percussive and melodic instruments in the *rondalla* has been a feature of this kind of ensemble for several centuries. While not part of the standard, *rondalla* instrumentation, Jenny's use of the lyre showed an intuitive understanding of the flexibility, in terms of instrumentation, that *rondallas* permit. The lyre was also incorporated with a *rondalla* at the Third International Rondalla Festival in Tagum City, Mindanao, Philippines during February 2011.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to the challenge of acquiring and maintaining instruments, another problem faced by groups like the Fatima *Rondalla*, where the founder is strongly motivated by social and cultural concerns but lacks specific knowledge and training in playing *rondalla* instruments, is finding a teacher or musical director to train the group. Even when an experienced *rondalla* musician can be found, the busy working schedules of many Filipino migrant workers in Taiwan make it very difficult for them to commit to regular volunteer activity. One such worker, who has selflessly shared his time, is Mr. Alessandro Bunangkal who hopes that someday, the youth members will know a lot more about playing *rondalla*. And the guitars they use will "guide them in their studies (*ang mga gitarang nilang ginagamit and kanilang magiging gabay sa kanilang pagaaral*)."<sup>50</sup>

Mr. Tsai, or "Daddy" explained that the *rondalla* lessons commenced with much time spent learning notes via *sol-fa* syllables and he and his wife spent a lot of time with the children during initial development of the group. Mr. Tsai pointed out that children's confidence can be fragile and they require frequent encouragement. He also encouraged them to practise at home external to group rehearsals.<sup>51</sup>

One important piece in the Fatima *Rondalla*'s repertoire is an instrumental version of the Kapampangan<sup>52</sup> song "*Atin Cu Pung Singsing*" (I Once Had a Ring). The song's lyrics tell of a gem inherited from the singer's father, which was put in a safe place but has been lost. This story can be viewed as a metaphor for the *rondalla*, which, as mentioned earlier, is slowly disappearing in the Philippine. This trend is lamented by that county's arts administrators and music educators who recognise its importance value as intangible, cultural heritage.<sup>53</sup>

The Fatima *Rondalla* has been able to perform at the Philippine Independence Day celebrations, an event which is celebrated regularly by Filipino migrants to Taiwan and many other parts of the world including Australia and New Zealand, and at International Migrant's Day. Regardless

<sup>49</sup> Rockell, K., field work observation, Tagum City, Mindanao, Philippines, 14–16 February 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Openshaw, "Rondalla in Taiwan," transl. Bien, J.

<sup>51</sup> Meco, "Manila Economic and Cultural Office."

<sup>52</sup> Kapampangan is a language spoken in Pampanga, in the central Luzon region of the Philippines.

<sup>53</sup> Ramirez, R., personal interview, Tuggeranong Shopping Centre, Canberra ACT, 26 May 2010.

of the group's level of musical attainment, documentation of *rondalla* activity through photograph and video is beneficial. Mrs Lu reported that her son gained in confidence and developed increased enthusiasm for *rondalla* after being able to view footage of his performance with the group. Children spoke enthusiastically in Chinese, English and Filipino about their *rondalla* instruments including the following comment which switches between all three languages in the course of the sentence:

"My name is Tiffany, is ten year old. *Ang hahawak po itong ... tawag niya pong banduniya*[sic]. 我喜欢弹它因为弹它很好听 (What I am holding Sir, is called a *bandurria* Sir. I like to play it because it sounds really good)." <sup>54</sup>

At the present time, Mrs. Tsai estimates that there are six families involved in studying *rondalla* at Fatima church. Unfortunately, however, despite the children's eagerness to learn more about their instruments, the demands of general education, school life and exams take precedence over *rondalla* participation and there are frequent breaks in musical activity. Mrs. Tsai tries to overcome this situation by encouraging the children to attend *rondalla* practice at Fatima church during their summer break. She sees the *Fatima Rondalla* as a starting point in her work with Taiwanese Filipino youths and hopes that Filipino communities in other parts of Taiwan will also be able to start *rondallas*, musical ensembles acting as vehicles for the celebration and transmission of Philippine cultural heritage. The continuing development of the *Fatima Rondalla* deserves documentation. In addition, the area of migrant voices within Taiwanese, multicultural music expression is of great interest and demands further investigation.

### Multicultural Australia

Multiculturalism, as currently understood and practised in Australia, provides an interesting contrast with the Taiwanese model. In Australia, multicultural policy developed "largely under the influence of the Department of Immigration and had its origins in fears of social disharmony created by mass immigration from non-British sources."<sup>55</sup> Australia was "officially declared 'multicultural'" in 1973, the year in which the so called "White Australia Policy" was denounced by the Whitlam Labour Government.<sup>56</sup> Despite this change of official orientation, however,

<sup>54</sup> Meco, "Manila Economic and Cultural Office."

<sup>55</sup> Jupp, J., "The Insitutions of Culture: Multiculturalism," in *Culture in Australia*, ed. Bennet, T. and Carter, D. (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 261.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

the "core of Australian life and institutions is still essentially of British origin."<sup>57</sup> Multiculturalism in Australia has not been without its critics, perhaps the most vocal of which was the One Nation party leader Pauline Hanson who in her 1996 maiden speech called for a radical review of the country's immigration policy and the abolishing of multiculturalism. Asian migrants especially were characterised negatively as forming ghettos and not assimilating into the Australian mainstream.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, multiculturalism has "never been officially repudiated," and has been reaffirmed by successive governments.<sup>59</sup> Cultural diversity remains a reality in contemporary Australia and the kind of on-going, public debate arising from events such as the 2005 Cronulla riots highlights the vital importance of continuing to develop effective, strategic multicultural policy and public education.<sup>60</sup> This is an area to which musical activity can contribute greatly.

At the time of writing, the Australian government remains "unwavering in its commitment to a multicultural Australia," which it sees as being "at the heart of our national identity" and "intrinsic to our history and character."<sup>61</sup> On 22 August 2011, Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard officially launched the Australian Multicultural Council (AMC), an advisory body with a broad mandate including a research and advisory role around multicultural policy, assistance with cultural diversity celebrations and the implementation of a "People of Australia Ambassadors' Program."<sup>62</sup> Included among the forty Australians recognised in 2012 for their "outstanding work in building strong and cohesive local communities" was Filipino community leader Dr. Cen Amores.<sup>63</sup> The continued diversity within the Australian population is framed positively and seen as bringing social, cultural and economic benefits to the country as a whole. The rights and responsibilities of "Australian of all backgrounds" include "being able to celebrate, practise and maintain their cultural heritage, traditions and language within the law and free from discrimination."<sup>64</sup>

The arts, music and performance are immediately engaging and positively representational of particular ethnicities. This is recognised by the Australian government which offers funding directly, at a

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 265.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 261.

<sup>60</sup> AAP, "Mob Violence Envelopes Cronulla," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 December 2005, <http://smh.com.au/news/national/mob-violence-envelopescronulla/2005/12/11/1134235936223.html>

<sup>61</sup> Australian Government, "Australian Multicultural Council," Australian Government, <http://www.amc.gov.au/index.htm>.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

Commonwealth and state level, as well as indirectly by investment in "new cultural centres, new festivals and awards or heritage sites."<sup>65</sup>

### ***Rondalla* Down Under: The Filipino-Australian Rondalla of Queensland**

Within the cultural context described above, several *rondallas* have been established in Australia.<sup>66</sup> These groups' founders are strongly motivated to insure the transmission of Philippine cultural heritage to second-generation, Philippine migrants. However, many leaders had no direct experience playing in *rondallas* so the groups themselves were actually reconstructions or recreations in a new environment.<sup>67</sup>

The Filipino-Australian *Rondalla* of Queensland is the personal initiative of Perla Pound who is originally from General Santos City, Mindanao in the southern Philippines.<sup>68</sup> Ms. Pound remembers her hometown as being a multi-lingual place where Tagalog, Cebuano and other Visayan dialects as well as Ilocano were spoken. Her family, who were from an Ilocano speaking region of Luzon, mainly spoke Tagalog at home. Now self-identifying as "*Aussie na talaga* (already a true Australian),"<sup>69</sup> before migrating to Australia where she has lived with her Australian husband for the last twenty years, Ms. Pound worked as a nurse in the Middle East, lived in the United States of America and travelled to several Latin American countries.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Bennet, T. and Carter, C., eds., *Culture in Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3.

<sup>66</sup> Rockell, "The Philippine Rondalla: Recreating Musical Heritage in Contemporary Australasia," 179–207.

<sup>67</sup> The first contemporary Australian *rondalla* developed in Canberra in 2002 and was able to influence the subsequent development of two others in Queensland and one in Melbourne, Victoria. Although Rondanihan in Canberra is Australia's most prominent *rondalla*, this article introduces a smaller, Australian *rondalla*, the Filipino-Australian *Rondalla* of Queensland which started in 2005.

<sup>68</sup> Present day General Santos was called Dadiangas by the original B'lann and Maguindanao Inhabitants. In 1939 General Paulino Santos established a settlement in Sarangani Bay with Filipinos from Luzon and the Visayas. Dadiangas was officially renamed General Santos in 1965.

<sup>69</sup> Pound, P., personal interview, Park Road, Milton QLD, Australia, 21 June 2010.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.



Figure 4: Perla Pound, founder of the Filipino-Australian *Rondalla* of Queensland with Her *Bandurria* (Photo Courtesy of Perla Pound).

Ms Pound's interest in what she described as "our ethnic instruments" developed later while travelling in Mexico.<sup>71</sup> There, and in other Latin American countries, particularly Peru, she remembers being struck by the similarities with the Philippine environment, costume, monuments, dances and music which brought the shared heritage of these two countries alive in the present.

Before leaving the Philippines, Ms. Pound's musical experience involved dancing and singing "indigenous songs and classical songs...and church songs."<sup>72</sup> As far as instrumental music such as the *rondalla* was concerned, however, she confides that "*hindi ako masyadong nagkahilig* (I wasn't particularly drawn to it)."<sup>73</sup> As explained earlier, however, Ms. Pound was, nevertheless, exposed to the *rondalla* during her years at primary school, such that later, during her migrant experience, a reappraisal of culture of origin led to an intensified appreciation of heritage value. This resulted in a kind of indirect musical transmission, a subliminal implanting which became active at a later stage of life. Nostalgia for the cultural heritage of her country of origin and a wish to make a contribution in her new environment motivated Ms Pound to create a *rondalla*.

On arriving in Australia, despite having already been resident in several countries, Ms. Pound experienced a kind of homesickness due to an absence of familiar, Philippine cultural markers in the new environment. This feeling was "homesick in the sense of music. You know, you always

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.



just hear other Western songs... not much [from] our culture."<sup>74</sup> This absence prompted Ms. Pound to organise a Filipino cultural group called *Karilagan* (Gorgeous). The group performs Filipino folk dances accompanied by CD or tape recordings, frequently of *rondalla* music. Physically-mediated musical activities such as singing and dancing are popular activities in migrant Filipino communities around the world, but Ms. Pound wanted to try something different. She claims that her love of musical instruments led her to consider putting live, instrumental music with the Filipino dancing instead of taped music. Ms. Pound was also of the opinion that most Filipino migrants, having arrived in Australia, just want to forget about their culture and are doing nothing to pass it on to the children in the community. Ms. Pound also recalls that her plan to establish a *rondalla* was not initially supported by her *kababayans* [fellow Filipinos] who told her that such a thing was not possible. "It was very hard at that time...everybody was laughing at me."<sup>75</sup> Even now Ms. Pound's impression of the way many migrant Filipinos react when they encounter a *rondalla* performance in Australia is that they smile or laugh derisively. As a champion of musical heritage, Ms. Pound appears to be a rare individual in the Filipino migrant community. She explained her stance:

We are here in a different world... different country and we adopted Australian culture too, then why can't we share our own culture which they appreciate... they like it! And when somebody appreciates you, the more you become aware that... they like our culture and you feel happy about it. And that to me is an inspiration... especially the children. They are not just and "Aussie-aussie" but they know their heritage... know where they come from and they know what beautiful music they have to inherit and share. Now there are some of our children that we teach them how to do *rondalla* the start of introduce it to their school.<sup>76</sup>

The characterisation of average Australians as "Aussie-aussie" suggests that from a migrant perspective contemporary Anglo-Celtic Australians appear to lack a distinctive cultural identity. Hence the concern that unless young Filipino-Australians learn about the Philippines, they might grow up "cultureless."

In most cases, when recreating or reconstructing Philippine *rondallas* in contemporary Australia, experienced teachers of *rondalla* or individuals with the prerequisite knowledge and resources to start these

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

ensembles are not available. Despite this difficulty, Ms. Pound believes that her "vision" as well as passion, love and the desire to share with the community sustained her in her search. On one occasion, during a return trip home to the Philippines, Ms. Pound encountered a group of blind musicians playing *rondalla* in a shopping mall and returned to the mall on a number of subsequent occasions listen to them play. She recalls noticing that most other Filipino shoppers merely ignored the musicians but as a *balikbayan* (expatriate Filipino returning home to the Philippines for a visit) she considered this a rare and valuable opportunity and listened attentively. So focussed was she that one of the musicians approached her saying: "Maybe you're from overseas? You are the only one sitting here listening!"<sup>77</sup>

Ms. Pound's long awaited encounter with *rondalla* musicians in Australia finally occurred serendipitously in 2004 while she was visiting a long-term Filipino friend in Canberra. This friend's husband, Caesar Aniversario, was a member of Rondanihan, a *rondalla* developed by Mr. Roy Ramirez and his wife in 2002 with guidance from Professor Ricardo Calubayan of the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines.<sup>78</sup>

On learning of Rondanihan, Ms. Pound sought the group's help in establishing her own *rondalla* and invited Mr. Ramirez and other members of Rondanihan to Ipswich twice to conduct training workshops. Ms. Pound's believes that music has a kind of indefinable, beneficent power or property and is something very "good" for children.<sup>79</sup>

Ms. Pound characterised Mr. Ramirez as being an extremely musical person who loves to sing both *karaoke* and also to the accompaniment of his *rondalla*. She recognised in Mr. Ramirez and his wife kindred spirits: "They are also [with] the same vision and passion [just] like me. So if you saw somebody like that you embrace each other so it's so wonderful that I met them."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid. Ms. Pound claims that such was her "burning desire to learn *rondalla*" that had she not eventually found a teacher in Australia she would have visited the Philippines again and asked the Mall performers to train her in *rondalla*.

<sup>78</sup> Ramirez, R., personal interview, Tuggeranong Shopping Centre, Canberra ACT, Australia, 26 May 2010.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Pound, P., personal interview, Park Road, Milton QLD, Australia, 21 June 2010.



Figure 5: Roy Ramirez of Rondanihan Conducts a *Rondalla* Workshop in Ipswich, Queensland (Photo Courtesy of Rondanihan).

As is the case in Taiwan where, in spite of the island's relative proximity to the Philippines, *rondalla* instruments are unavailable, procuring them is also difficult for Australian ensembles. Acting on the advice of Roy Ramirez in Canberra, Ms. Pound chose instruments from the Oscar Bandilla factory and travelled to the Philippines personally to purchase them.<sup>81</sup> She believes that Bandilla brand instruments have better intonation and sound quality than other Philippine-made *rondalla* instruments. Extra strings were also bought at the same time as the instruments, made necessary by the frequent breakages of the "very, very fragile" strings.<sup>82</sup> Although problems that can arise when bringing instruments to a place with a different climate, and Ms. Pound has personally experienced one of her *rondalla* instruments developing a crack, she believes that, in general, Bandilla's export quality instruments, which were designed initially for the much larger market in the USA are "good for hot and cold."<sup>83</sup> She also believes that it is important for *rondallas* to maintain homogeneity of timbre, a quality she thinks can only be achieved if all instrumentalists use instruments of the same brand or from the same maker. Unlike other contemporary Australian *rondallas*, the Filipino-Australian *Rondalla* of Queensland acquired their instruments without any state funding or assistance. The group was, however, able to take benefit from the previous experience of Rondanihan who included instruments for them in one of Rondanihan's bulk instrument orders from the Philippines.

<sup>81</sup> Bandilla, O. J., "O.C. Bandilla Music Instrument Store," <http://ph.88db.com/Talent-Management/Musical-Instruments-for-Rent/ad-133250/>.

<sup>82</sup> Pound, P., personal interview, Park Road, Milton QLD, Australia, 21 June 2010.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

The Filipino-Australian *Rondalla* of Queensland's performances to date have included a maiden performance in Ipswich City Hall and appearances at private birthday parties and nursing homes. Extra-musical funding-raising activity such as sausage sizzles or garage sales and musical activity external to *rondalla*, for example *karaoke* evenings, are also held.

One significant presentation was *Romance of the Rondalla*, a joint concert with Rondanihan in October 2005.<sup>84</sup> This concert coincided with the launch of Rondanihan's first CD *Strings, Music and Magic* and was supported by SBS Filipino Radio Station in Sydney,<sup>85</sup> the Philippine Embassy in Canberra and a number of private business sponsors.<sup>86</sup> VIP guest speakers including Mr. Alan Albert Grummit, the Queensland Philippine Honorary Consul General were also present at the event.

Three of the items performed at this concert were arrangements of twentieth-century songs by Philippine composers. "*Mabuhay*" is the commonly recognised title of *We Say Mabuhay* by Philippine bandmaster Tirso Cruz Sr. This piece is a presidential anthem played during Philippine military and government ceremonies, the word *mabuhay* meaning something like "long life" and often used for public toasts, welcoming guests, or in praise of notable persons.

In general, Ms. Pound characterises the repertoire of the Philippine *rondalla* as being very romantic, a feature which arises from the ensembles traditional connection to the Filipino *harana* or house to house serenade.<sup>87</sup> "*Silayan*" is an alternative title for the Philippine *kundiman* song "*Lahat ng Araw*" composed by Miguel Velarde Jr. (1913–). From the root word *silay* [glimpse], the song appeared in the 1939 movie *Pasang Krus*. "*Gaano Kita Kamahal*" means literally "How Much I Love You" in Filipino and was written by Filipino composer Levi Celerio (1910–2002).

Other pieces by non-Filipino composers were in keeping with the romantic theme. The song known as "Spanish Eyes," with lyrics by Snyder and Singleton, was originally a 1965 instrumental piece by German bandleader Bert Kempfert entitled "Moon Over Naples." "Somewhere My Love" is a song based of the leitmotif "Lara's theme," written for the 1965 film *Doctor Zhivago* by composer Maurice Jarre. Lyrics by Paul Francis Webster were added to the melody and as "Somewhere My Love" the song enjoyed worldwide, popular success. The Rodgers and Hammerstein show tune "Climb Every Mountain" is from the 1959 musical *The Sound of Music*.

<sup>84</sup> Rondanihan, "'Romance of the Rondalla' A Joint Concert of Filipino-Australian Rondalla of Queensland and Rondanihan Concert Programme," 2005.

<sup>85</sup> SBS is the Australian Special Broadcasting Service which now broadcasts in a large number of different languages. SBS television first began full-time transmission on 24 October 1980.

<sup>86</sup> "Rondanihan," <http://www.rondallacanberra.org.au/>.

<sup>87</sup> Pound, P., personal interview, Park Road, Milton QLD, Australia, 21 June 2010.

Although Philippine *rondalla* music has been strongly linked to folk music/dance and oral/aural transmission,<sup>88</sup> it is clear the performance repertoire of the Filipino-Australian *Rondalla* of Queensland contains much music composed by specific composers.

Later in the programme the link between *rondalla* and dance is made overt in a performance entitled Dance and Music "*Harana*" presented by *Karilagan*. Members of the Filipino-Australian *Rondalla* of Queensland also participated with the support of Rondanihan and the programme concluded with the launch of Rondanihan's CD. A message from Mr. Ramirez in the printed programme includes the words "We have come tonight to embrace you to be our new family. Together we will accomplish much for the benefit of all music lovers."<sup>89</sup> A copy of a letter from then Ambassador of the Philippines to Australia appears saying: "By promoting the beautiful music of the Philippines, the group has done the Philippines a valuable service." The Filipino-Australian *Rondalla* of Queensland is presented under the umbrella of Rondanihan and the letter does not mention the group's present self-appointed name, referring to it instead as "Rondanihan Queensland under the leadership of Mr. Roy Ramirez." A letter of support from the chairperson of Ipswich Multicultural Projects which follows states: "The unique sound of their strings is a welcome addition to the already rich variety of multicultural wealth in this region."<sup>90</sup>

Following on from the intensive formative period of 2005, the activity of the Filipino-Australian *Rondalla* of Queensland waned and the group went through several phases of intermittent inactivity. As the Filipino-Australian *Rondalla* of Queensland grew, it also changed from being a close-knit group of Filipino friends to a multicultural ensemble which welcomes non-Filipinos. Ms. Pound emphasised that her *rondalla* is non-denominational and open to people from diverse backgrounds and different nationalities. Such a barrier free orientation maximises the potential to share and make known the Philippine musical heritage. This kind of broad sharing is perhaps distinct from a specifically ambassadorial role or from the purposes of sharing musical heritage for the benefit of the children of Filipino or Filipino-Australian ethnicity. Ms. Pound does not view the bringing of Filipino culture to Australia as a way of creating and exclusive or bounded Filipino in-group, but rather wishes to get together with others regardless of ethnicity.<sup>91</sup> She is also desirous that this attitude be more widespread in the Australian community: "I want them to be united. No barriers in your culture... no barriers!"<sup>92</sup> In some respects, low

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<sup>88</sup> Calubayan, "Development and Evaluation of a Manual for a School Rondalla," 5.

<sup>89</sup> Rondanihan, "'Romance of the Rondalla:' A Joint Concert of Filipino-Australian Rondalla of Queensland and Rondanihan Concert Programme," 2005.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

key, grass-roots performances, in places such as shopping malls are more effective in facilitating interaction between Australians of different ethnicities than specifically multicultural events where difference is emphasised and audiences tend to congregate according to ethnicity in support of the performers. Ms. Pound recalls an occasion when, during a mall performance, she was approached by an Anglo-Celtic Australian woman who had adopted a child from the Philippines and wished to join the group.<sup>93</sup> Ms. Pound's fondness for mall performances may also have been influenced by her earlier positive experience on encountering a *rondalla* performing at a mall in the Philippines. In Australia, just as in the Philippines, Ms. Pound observed a luke-warm reception to *rondalla* on the part of Filipinos while, in contrast, non-Filipino Australians are very appreciative when they encounter the ensemble.<sup>94</sup> At the same time as promoting a non-denominational and multicultural ideology in her attempts to celebrate Philippine *rondalla*, Ms. Pound recognises that such ideas may be problematic for some migrant Filipinos. "They are not supportive in our Ipswich. Not very supportive because Catholics cannot go with Protestants... but I try to break that!" She confided.<sup>95</sup>

When I met Ms. Pound in June 2010, she expressed her firm commitment to continue to develop the group, re-iterating the experience of "vision" and "passion" which motivated her involvement in *rondalla* and describing her meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Ramirez as a "dream come true."<sup>96</sup> She was looking forward to celebrating the anniversary or the group's foundation in February 2011. Sadly, however, for those involved in *rondalla* in Ipswich, this was delayed by the disastrous flooding which affected Queensland in December 2010 causing damage to Ms. Pound's house and the *rondalla* instruments stored there and *rondalla* practices were postponed.<sup>97</sup>

In spite of this, Ms. Pound's work in Ipswich has brought a previously unavailable mode of musical participation to the Ipswich community and surrounding areas. For migrant Filipinos in Queensland, the lost jewel has been found once more, available for those who treasure it.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. Ms. Pound recalls a performance at a school fete in Ipswich where, despite her *rondalla*'s limited repertoire, the onlookers were "amazed and liked it more and more!"

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Pound, P., email to the author.

## CONCLUSION

Important commonalities as well as strong contrasts have emerged in the profiles of the two *rondallas* presented in this article, bearing witness to the specific circumstances of each location. Whilst in Taiwan, the Catholic Church has a vital, supportive role and it the main support of *rondalla* activity, in Ipswich, religious affiliation is associated with a divisive sectarianism which is a barrier to full participation in *rondalla* by migrant Filipinos. At the same time, in Australia, the social structures supporting *rondalla* activity appear almost over-politicised with formalised committees and "presidents" offering rousing speeches full of extra-musical hyperbole. As Taiwanese *rondalla* activity is only in a formative stage, and still subsumed within church-based community activities there is little room for this kind of "political play."

As the governments and peoples of Taiwan and Australia negotiate their own versions of multiculturalism according to their own needs, for Filipinos, concerned with musical heritage practice and transmission, the situation in Taiwan is far less positive than it is in Australia. At the time of writing, despite the vibrant activity on International Migrants' Day, it would appear that Multicultural Taiwan is still much more of a rhetorical aspiration than a lived reality. In Australia, numerous Filipinos enjoy privileged roles, and their cultural expressions are no more or less important than migrants of other backgrounds, including Taiwanese. In Taiwan, on the other hand, there is very little or no recognition of the dignified gift of Filipino cultural heritage. The strong association in the Taiwanese public imagination between the Philippines and Filipino migrants performing difficult or dangerous labour or domestic help means there is little likelihood of the value of transmission of Filipino cultural heritage being taken seriously. This is precisely why it is so vital that the important work of Ms. Tsai be recognised and supported.

Because of the opportunities put in place by the Australian government, *rondallas* in Australia have many more structured performance opportunities and, as a result, have a more outgoing, representative emphasis. The children in the Fatima *rondalla* also relish the opportunity to perform but at present the focus is very much on the self-esteem and welfare of the Filipino and Filipino-Taiwanese children in learning to positively appraise an important part of their heritage.

In spite of these differences, very strong commonalities also appear such as the belief in music's beneficence, music as some "good" for the children, and the corresponding perception that most Filipino migrants, whether in Taiwan or Australia, are not interested in musical heritage preservation or transmission. As the *rondalla* tradition is foreign to both Taiwan and Australia, procuring instruments in those countries has been

clearly shown to be very difficult. At the time of writing, it appears that the best solution for migrant *rondallas* is to follow the example of the Australian groups and contact Oscar Bandilla, who has experience exporting instruments to a number of countries outside the Philippines.

The most serious obstacle which this article has brought to light, however, is the difficulty in finding sufficiently trained *rondalla* instructors outside the Philippines. The laudable aspirations, ideology and volunteer work of several Filipino migrants have been highlighted in this paper. Aspiration alone, however, is not enough to train and maintain *rondalla* ensembles. Two potential solutions exist in answer to this problem. The first is to offer a regular, short-term arts residency, perhaps to be held by a Filipino music education student or recent graduate, to help foster the *rondalla* skills of migrant Filipinos outside the Philippines. A second solution, which would only require initial, but not on-going expenditure, is the creation of an educational media-resource for *rondalla*, available for free down-load to migrant Filipinos anywhere in the world. Although method books for Filipino *rondalla* and *rondalla* instruments are available, they are scarce and often not immediately accessible. Also, as the Filipino *rondalla* tradition has long been associated with aural transmission and *oido*, an instructional video would be truer to the character or traditional *rondalla* activity while making the best use of contemporary technology. Video clips of *rondalla* performance can be viewed on the Internet, but these are not generally presented with pedagogic purposes. Taiwan-based film maker Tobie Openshaw, who has been involved in documenting the growth of the Fatima *Rondalla* in Taiwan, has expressed interest in collaborating on an educational *rondalla* project.<sup>98</sup> As a contemporary ethnomusicologist, I am optimistic that the recommendations arising from my current research might lead to constructive action. Such action has the potential to help bring the gift of musical heritage to migrant Filipinos and their children anywhere. Similarly, it is hoped that this article might contribute to the amelioration of minority migrants struggle in finding their place in the increasingly multicultural societies of an increasingly interconnected world.

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<sup>98</sup> Openshaw, T., email to the author, 24 February 2012.