kulintang kultura

Danongan Kalanduyan and Gong Music of the Philippine Diaspora
1. Kapamalong-malong Dance Music I 2:15
2. Kapamalong-malong Dance Music II 3:19
3. Singkil Dance Music 2:06
4. Sagayan na Dilabpet Dance Music 2:29
5. Ka’atung Dance Music of the Teduray 2:18
6. Pangalay Dance Music 2:54

MAGINDANAO KULINTANG REPERTOIRE
7. Kaluntang 1:22
8. Duyog I 1:15
9. Duyog II 1:38
10. Sinulog a Kamamatuan I 1:30
11. Sinulog a Kamamatuan II 1:27
12. Sinulog a Kamamatuan III 1:15
13. Sinulog a Kangungudan 2:33
14. Binalig I 1:49
15. Binalig II 1:31
16. Binalig III 2:33
17. Tidtu 0:58
18. Tidtu Agung, Contest 0:40

DISC ONE / Traditional Music & Dance of the Southern Philippines
Danongan Kalanduyan and the Palabuniyan Kulintang Ensemble © 2003 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

MUSIC FOR DANCE ACCOMPANIMENT

MARANAO KOLINTANG REPERTOIRE
19. Kanditagaonan 1:35
20. Kasulampid 1:56
21. Kapagonor 2:30
22. Kapamamayog 1:45
23. Katuronan 1:52
24. Katuronan, Kanditagaonan, Kapamamayog, and Kapagonor (medley) 3:51

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This recording is part of the Asian Pacific America series, and received Federal support from the Asian Pacific Americans Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center.

DISC TWO / Kulintang in the Philippine Diaspora
1. World Gong Crazy | Han Han feat. DATU 4:20 © 2014 Han Han under license to Smithsonian Folkways Recordings (A. J. Punzalan, SOCAN–H. Pablo, SOCAN–R. Candido, SOCAN–R. Boquila, SOCAN)
7. Afroyesa Maranaw | Bo Razón 3:58 © 2019 Round Whirled Records under license to Smithsonian Folkways Recordings (R. W. Razón/Bora Songs Unlimited, BMI)
12. Binalig a Kulndet | Danongan Kalanduyan, Bernard Ellorin, and Eric Abutin 1:45 © 2006 Bernard Ellorin under license to Smithsonian Folkways Recordings
13. Duyog and Sinulog a Kamamatuan | Kim Kalanduyan 5:27 © 2021 Kim Kalanduyan under license to Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

This recording is part of the Asian Pacific America series, and received Federal support from the Asian Pacific Americans Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center.
The music on this album is both ancient and modern, both rooted and scattered. *Kulintang* music pre-dates (even though it is often associated with) Muslim culture of the southern Philippines. But this album is not a story about a patient on life support—a desperate operation to breathe life into a dying form. Instead, *Kulintang Kultura* reminds us what continues to beat at the heart of any culture—its unique rhythms, melodies, and harmonies. We often make a mistake in thinking that cultural traditions are timeless and never-changing, when in fact they hold fast in the storm just as much as they bend when they need to or can. *Kulintang Kultura* is the music of the steadfast, the transplanted, the re-rooted, the re-routed, the stuck, the damned, the curious, and the dreamer.

In Filipino history, culture and politics are deeply intertwined. During the Spanish colonial era (1521–1898), locals infused Christian-imported prayers with anti-colonial prophecy. In the 19th century, elite Philippine-born men studying abroad in Europe like Jose Rizal, Felix Hidalgo, and Juan Luna turned to the disciplines of painting and literature to demand representation and eventually sovereignty. It’s no wonder that so many Filipino actors, singers, and playwrights filled the ranks of revolutionary movements against both Spain (1896–1898) and the United States (1899–1913). They laughed and cried in the vernacular; they sang, strummed, and danced in ways that would later be looked back on nostalgically as “folk” or “ethnic.” Under pain of punishment, they took to stages and performed “seditious plays,” singing banned anthems and waving outlawed flags.

With the 1898 Treaty of Paris, Spain’s sale of its Philippine colony to the US for $20,000,000 facilitated the movement of Filipinos to the US and its territories as “US nationals,” a legal limbo that meant they were neither citizens nor aliens. Steamships carried Filipino laborers to the plantations of Hawaii as early as 1906. With the passage of the 1924 Asian Exclusion Act, barring Chinese and Japanese labor migration to the US, Filipinos filled the economic gap on the continent. Thousands of working men and women (even though recruiters prioritized the hire of single males) deferred their education plans to work in factories, on plantations, and in hotels as janitors or cooks. By the end of the decade, they had stepped into the worst economic downturn in US history and were getting blamed for it. Anti-Filipino riots exploded from Yakima Valley, Washington, to Watsonville, California, to drive out the “brown horde.”

The great chronicler of Filipino American lives during the 1930s to the 1950s, Carlos Bulosan, summed up what life was like for immigrants who were welcomed at first by capitalism and later chased by racism: “I feel like a criminal running away from a crime I did not commit. And the
crime is that I am a Filipino in America” (1960). Filipinos challenged anti-miscegenation laws that deemed them, their partners, and their mixed-race children pariahs. By 1934, the US Congress passed the Tydings-McDuffie Act, which ended the colonial status of the Philippines after a ten-year period of “tutelage.” The press touted this as a colony’s long-sought liberation. But for thousands of Filipinos in the US and Hawai‘i who became aliens overnight, the new law was exclusion by another name. As World War II approached, Filipinos in the US had their hearts broken in complicated places. The Japanese empire’s attack on Pearl Harbor was followed immediately by the bombardment of American military bases in the Philippines, which the US had been operating rent-free since the beginning of the 20th century. Filipinos in the US and Hawai‘i answered the call for military service, many doing so in order to liberate their Philippine “homeland,” which they hadn’t seen in decades.

During their travels to the US and Hawai‘i in the first half of the 20th century, Filipinos did not have reliable access to many of their native instruments, especially those from the southern Philippines. As US colonials, they were enlivened by the vibrancy of jazz and show tunes, learning the music of the colonizer even before they stepped on the shores of Hawai‘i and California. They played jaunty marches with precision in military bands. Farm hands lucky enough to have guitars and violins could make long days pass more quickly with a familiar tune. Members of touring bands hitting the Chautauqua circuit could sharpen their skills on the road for fascinated audiences.

If it had not been for a handful of pioneering musicians like Danongan (“Danny”) Kalanduyan, the instrument and repertoire he championed would have faded from memory and practice long ago. His life mirrored post–World War II Philippine history. He was born just a year after the US’ only formal colony achieved its independence in 1946. During Ferdinand Marcos’ martial law period Kalanduyan moved to the US, where he pursued his education and became a master teacher to a new generation of US-based Filipino Americans hungry for a deep cultural anchoring far from their ancestors’ home.

While Kulintang Kultura pays homage to the professional and personal journey of a generous teacher and talented musician, we also look forward to how Filipino Americans find endless ways to sing new communities into existence. For as many times as the wretched immigrant and worker has had to swallow American bitterness, there has also been the sweet. We turn to the poets like Carlos Bulosan who remind us where to find it: “There was music in me, and it was stirring to be born” (1946, 225).
Kulintang (COO-lin-tahng), an ensemble of gongs and drum from the southern Philippines, sparked the creative imagination of Filipino Americans when master musician Danongan “Danny” S. Kalanduyan immigrated to the US in the 1970s. For decades, Kalanduyan taught dedicated students who were inspired by his passion to cultivate a deep respect for the arts of Muslim Filipinos as part of Filipino Americans’ rich heritage. Thus, the kulintang musical tradition took root in America, and Filipino Americans embraced its sound, and its cultural significance, in their own artistic expressions.

When Kalanduyan passed away on September 28, 2016, he was referred to in news articles as the “father of American kulintang,” reflecting his profound impact on Filipino Americans and reverential admirers who were fascinated by the sounds of kulintang. “Guro” (teacher) Danny or “Master K,” as he was affectionately known, was respected by many because he never promoted the music as sound alone—he had a clear message about its meaning.

“The music is a way for Filipinos to communicate with each other,” said Kalanduyan, who led a group called the Palabuniyan Kulintang Ensemble. “It is performed for entertainment purposes, for weddings and for other social occasions as well. But what it does more than anything else is to bring Filipinos together and help us retain our cultural heritage” (San Francisco State University 2000).
Kalanduyan came to the US from the southern Philippines, a region encompassing Mindanao island and the Sulu Archipelago (see map on page 9), where Islam was once the dominant religion. The northern and central regions had been colonized by the Spanish, who converted most of the population to Catholicism and outlawed indigenous rituals and practices for 300 years. Although many cultural groups of the south like the Magindanao (also spelled “Maguindanao”), Maranao, Tausug, and Sama converted to Islam starting in the 13th century by way of Muslim merchants, they also continued many of their ancient traditions and lifeways. Kulintang music existed prior to the arrival of Islam and is neither “Muslim music” nor religious—it is an indigenous tradition that has deep roots in Southeast Asia, similar to other bronze gong cultures like Indonesian gamelan. The gongs of Southeast Asia are unique for their raised center, called a knob or boss, that facilitates precise tuning (Miller and Williams 2008, 31). The earliest knobbed gongs may have been cast in Java a century or two before the Common Era, and this manner of casting gongs spread to the rest of Southeast Asia including the southern Philippines (Matusky 2008, 332).

Kalanduyan (ca. 1947–2016) was born near the ancient river port of Datu Piang (formerly known as Dulawan) in Magindanao province on Mindanao island. His people, the Magindanao (“people of the flooded plain”), live along the Pulangi River, a major waterway that flooded the valley, leaving the soil rich for farming. Among the Magindanao, kulintang music is enjoyed by all genders and ages as part of everyday life, but few are singled out as master musicians. Danny learned his craft from expert musicians on both sides of his extended family, who developed a recognizable style of playing that was admired far and wide. His father Kalanduyan Tanggo was a master kudyapi (two-stringed lute) player, and his mother Sibay Undol Batawan and her sisters were respected kulintang musicians. For centuries, women were the primary performers of kulintang, and Danny had his first lesson as a child sitting on his mother's lap. The playing style of women, characterized by gentle, straightforward melodies, came to be known as kamamatuan (“old”) style.

With this troupe, Kalanduyan toured Southeast Asia and learned effective ways to present traditional arts for the stage. He graduated with a BA in Community Development before leaving for the US in 1976 under a Rockefeller Foundation grant with the assistance of Dr. Robert Garfias, an ethnomusicologist at the University of Washington, Seattle. Danny served as an artist-in-residence at the UW, where he graduated with a MA in ethnomusicology in 1984. At the university, several of Danny's colleagues including Dr. Usopay Cadar and Dr. Yoshitaka Terada formed the Mindanao Kulintang Ensemble.

Until around the 1950s, men only played the supporting instruments of the kulintang ensemble, called agung (a pair of large, knobbed gongs with a wide rim) and dabakan (barrel-shaped drum covered with stretched goatskin across the head), but not the main instrument of eight knobbed gongs laid in a row, also called kulintang. When they began to take up the kulintang instrument, men added the interlocking, percussive rhythms of agung and dabakan to the kulintang’s simple melodies. This shift gave rise to kungungudan (“new”) style, which is faster and more rhythmic than kamamatuan. Danny was influenced by these innovators, especially his uncle Amal Lumuntod, who became a local celebrity when he was featured on records by ethnomusicologist José Maceda, including Music of the Magindanao (1955) and Kulintang and Kudyapiq (1989). Lumuntod formed an ensemble with Danny and his cousins to perform at celebrations and weddings, and by the time Danny was a teenager, he was well known for his expertise on the gandingan (set of four knobbed hanging gongs with a narrow rim), showing off his improvisational skill in a fast, percussive style called kulndet.

After high school, Kalanduyan attended Mindanao State University in Marawi City, the homeland of another Muslim Filipino group called the Maranao. He developed an appreciation for their related but distinct tradition of kolintang music and joined the Darangan Cultural Dance Troupe.


Kalanduyan & father Kalanduyan Tanggo. Photo by Mary Talusan Lacandalo.

Danny Kalanduyan & family. Photo by Mary Talusan Lacandalo.

Palabuniyan Kulintang Ensemble have included Conrad Benedicto, Titania Buchholdt, Holly Calica, Alexis Canillo, Manny Dragon, Ron Querian, Jocelyne Ampon, Patricia Aquino, Olivia Sawi, Melissa Martinez, Geraldine Santos, Michelle Bautista, Danilo Begonia, Caroline Cabading, Daryll Santuray, Tala Ibabao, Lizae Reyes, Daniel Giray, Patrick Tamayo, Cota Yabut, and Mitchell Yangson.

The performers on this recording, made in 2003 at San Jose State University, are listed below. Following tradition, musicians rotate between the supporting instruments of agung, gandingan, dabakan, and babandil, playing different instruments on each piece. Thus, we do not know who played each instrument on every track. Unless otherwise noted, Danongan Kalanduyan is playing the main kulintang (or kolintang) instrument on the track.

Musicians

Prof. Danilo Begonia (agung and gandingan) retired from teaching and administrative positions in 2003 after 39 years with the Department of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University. Conrad J. Benedicto (kulintang, dabakan, and agung) is a high school teacher in San Francisco. A two-time recipient of funding through the Alliance for California Traditional Arts Master-Apprentice program, he began his studies with Master Kalanduyan in 1998.
Alexis Canillo (agung and gandingan) began his studies with Kalanduyan in 1997 and specializes in playing the agung. His cultural heritage is Native Californian (Pomo and Coast Miwok) and Cebuano (one of many Filipino ethnolinguistic groups).

Manny Dragon (gandingan and agung) is a martial arts instructor who teaches the Villablille-Largusa Kali System in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has been a member of the Palabuniyan Kulintang Ensemble since 1999.

Dr. Bernard Ellorin (kulintang, dabakan, and babandil) is the founder of the Pakaraguian Kulintang Ensemble and the director of the kulintang ensemble for the Samahan Filipino American Performing Arts & Education Center. He is on the faculty of Miramar College and at MiraCosta College in San Diego County, California, and teaches kulintang as a Master Artist with the Alliance for California Traditional Arts Master-Apprentice program.

Daryll Santuray (babandil and agung) was a dancer and musician in the Palabuniyan Kulintang Ensemble during the 2000s.

3. Singkil Dance Music
The word singkil means “to jump over an obstacle,” but it can also refer to jewelry worn around the ankle. The singkil dance depicts a female dancer stepping gracefully between bamboo poles that clap together in a repeated, rhythmic pattern heard on the track. A person holding each end of the poles strikes the ground for three beats and claps them together on the upbeats of counts three and four. The dancer must avoid having her ankles trapped by the closing bamboo poles as she twirls a fan in each hand. (No gandingan)

4. Sagayan na Dilabpet Dance Music
A different version of tagunggo is played to accompany the sagayan na dilabpet dance. Sagayan means “to dance” and dilabpet means “to leap,” describing the movements of a male dancer who shakes a shield with small bells attached to it (they can be heard on this track). Traditionally, a shaman dances to tagunggo pieces and enters a trance to cure an afflicted person. Today, this dance is performed for entertainment during weddings and celebrations.

5. Ka’atung Dance Music of the Teduray
Ka’atung is a social dance performed by women of the Teduray (formerly spelled “Tiruray”) people, a tribal group from the highland rainforest of Upi, Magindanao province. The Teduray ensemble is called karatung and is made up of several small, handheld gongs, also called agung, with a narrow rim and a knob in the center. Each member of the ensemble strikes a specific pattern on the center of the gong that, when they are played all together, form an interlocking melody. A timekeeper taps on the rim of an agung, and bells play on the offbeat.

6. Pangalay Dance Music
Music to accompany the pangalay, a dance of the Tausug people of the Sulu Archipelago, in which performers wear long, metal fingernails to accentuate their hand and arm movements. The Sama people have a similar dance called igal. Women and men dance pangalay solo or together as partners for weddings, celebrations, and rituals. A musician plays a repeated pattern on the highest gong of the kulintangan (the Tausug word for kulintang) while another plays the melody, accompanied by a dabakan and agung. (No gandingan).
may be played in the kamamatuan style. Kangung-
gudan, a newer style that developed when men
began to play the kulintang instrument sometime
in the 1950s, focuses on rhythmic improvisation
and technical agility. The types of pieces called
binalig, sinulog, and tidtu can be played in the kan-
gungudan style. Other pieces like kaluntang, played
to scare away birds, and tagunggo, sometimes
used for dance or ritual, stand alone and are not
considered to be in either style.

7. Kaluntang
A piece played by farmers on tuned wood logs called
luntang at harvest time to scare away birds. In this
version, two people play the music on the kulintang
instrument accompanied by dabakan.

8. Duyog I
The Magindanao word duyog means “to catch up.”
During a duyog piece, the babandil, or timekeeper
gong, enters first and may intentionally speed
up the tempo as the piece progresses so that the
other players must catch up. This is a piece in the
kamamatuan or old style, played by the complete
ensemble of babandil, dabakan, kulintang, gandin-
gan, and agung.

9. Duyog II
This version of duyog is played at a faster tempo
than “Duyog I” (track 8) with added rhythmic
ornamentation, but it is still considered a piece
in kamamatuan or old style. As on “Duyog I,” the
entire Magindanao kulintang ensemble plays
this piece.

10. Sinulog a Kamamatuan I
Sinulog is a Magindanao word derived from the root
word sulog (flow, stream, or ocean current). Played
in the kamamatuan style, pieces identified as sinu-
log a kamamatuan are popular among women and
have a moderate tempo. This version is played by
the full Magindanao kulintang ensemble.

11. Sinulog a Kamamatuan II
Another sinulog piece in the old style with a differ-
ent melody than “Sinulog a Kamamatuan I” (track
10). This piece begins with a repeated pattern on
the babandil followed by dabakan, kulintang,
gandingan, and agung.

12. Sinulog a Kamamatuan III
A third version of sinulog using a different melody
than the previous two tracks. On this version,
Bernard Ellorin plays kulintang, while Danny plays
a secondary melody on the gandingan. They are
accompanied by babandil, dabakan, and agung.

13. Sinulog a Kangungudan
Sinulog in the new, faster style called
kangungudan that is popular among men and
younger players who add rhythmic ornamentation
as the main melody. Conrad Benedicto is featured
on the kulintang while Danny plays a contrasting
melody on gandingan, accompanied by babandil,
dabakan, and agung.

14. Binalig I
Binalig is derived from the root word balig (with a
foreign or heavy accent). Binalig pieces originate
from music played on the two-string lute called
kudyapi and are played in kangungudan or new
style with quick, repeated notes. The kulintang
instrument is accompanied by babandil, dabakan,
and gandingan, without agung.

15. Binalig II
This version of binalig features Danny playing the
gandingan in a fast, rhythmic way called kulndet—
the style for which he was famous. Bernard Ellorin
plays kulintang, and they are accompanied by babandil and dabakan, without agung.

16. Binalig III
Another version of binalig that features the melodic variation of the kulintang instrument accompanied by babandil, dabakan, and agung without the gandingan. The melody, presented on the lowest four notes of the kulintang, repeats on the highest four gongs before it returns to the lower register.

17. Tidtu
Tidtu is a Magindanao word that means “straight” or “authentic.” This version is in the kangungudan style and features the agung playing rhythmic solos. Only the kulintang instrument, dabakan, and babandil accompany the agung; the gandingan is absent here.

18. Tidtu Agung Contest
This version of tidtu in kangungudan style is played for contests featuring agung players, a highlight of Magindanao music at informal gatherings and weddings. Bernard Ellorin plays kulintang accompanied by dabakan and babandil, while Danny plays a fast improvisation on a pair of agung. During contests, agung players take turns to show off their skill, agility, and endurance.

MARANAO KOLINTANG REPERTOIRE
tracks 19–24

A Maranao kolintang (spelled with an “o” instead of a “u”) ensemble consists of a kolintang instrument of eight knobbed gongs laid in a row, dabakan drum (sometimes spelled “dabaduan” or “dbakan”), the babandil timekeeper gong (also spelled “babandir”), and a player on each of the two agung gongs playing interlocking parts. Women are still the primary performers on the main kolintang instrument while men play the supporting instruments. A professional female kolintang performer is called an onor. Kolintang ensembles typically do not use gandingan, but Kalanduyan’s arrangements of Maranao pieces add gandingan to some tracks. Compared to Magindanao kulintang, Maranao kolintang repertoire does not have two different styles of playing (kamamatuan or kangungudan) or rely on a rhythmic mode to define a type of piece. Maranao kolintang pieces have a specific melody attached to the composition—“Kanditagaonan,” “Kapmamayog,” and “Kapagonor”; may twirl the sticks she uses to play the kolintang instrument in an artful way to entertain guests.

19. Kanditagaonan
A well-known melody often used in a children’s song that asks a friend (Ditagaonan) to help plant sweet potatoes. Another version of the lyrics that accompany “Kanditagaonan” tells about a young girl who feels sad because she does not have a nice malong (woven skirt) to wear. The dabakan begins the piece, followed by the babandil before the kolintang and agung enter. The kolintang instrument plays a repeated pattern with the left hand on the lowest gong while the right hand plays a simple melody.

20. Kasulampid
Kasulampid in the Maranao language means “criss-cross.” The melody of this song requires the hands of the kolintang player to cross over each other, making extramusical references to the movements of a weaver. According to Dr. Usopay Cadar, a Maranao American ethnomusicologist, another version “depicts conflict among contenders,” men who vie to play the accompanying instruments for an attractive female kolintang player (Cadar 1973, 246).

21. Kapagonor
The Maranao word kapagonor is derived from the root word onor, meaning “accomplished.” An onor (also the word for a female professional musician) may play the kolintang instrument in an artful way to entertain guests. On this track, the dabakan enters first, followed by the babandil, agung, kolintang, and gandingan (not typically featured in kolintang ensembles).

22. Kapmamayog
A melancholy song about a woman who suspects that her lover Mamayog is going to visit another woman. In the sung version, she warns him not to be gone too long. The dabakan enters first, followed by the babandil, agung, kolintang, and gandingan.

23. Kapmamayog
Kapagonor
A song inviting a man named Toronan to play kolintang at a celebration. The kolintang player repeats a rhythm on the lowest gong with the left hand while playing the melody with the right hand. The dabakan starts this piece, followed by agung, babandil, and kolintang.

24. Katuronan, Kanditagaonan, Kapmamayog, and Kapagonor (medley)
A medley arranged by Kalanduyan of four Maranao pieces featured on this album (tracks 19, 21, 22, and 23). A dabakan begins the medley followed by agung, babandil, kolintang, and gandingan.
Danny Kalanduyan often emphasized that kulintang music existed before the arrival of Spanish colonizers, who were never able to conquer the Muslim and tribal people of Mindanao and eradicate indigenous traditions. He communicated this message to Filipino Americans, whose heritage mostly comes from Hispanicized, Christianized cultures and who were in search of Philippine arts that were not "tainted" by Western influence. Many Filipino American folk dance groups and cultural night shows found their answer in the famed Bayanihan National Dance Company of the Philippines’ theatrical choreography of the singkil dance, but Kalanduyan and others took issue with stereotypical portrayals of Muslim Filipinos as warlike and exotic. While a sword-wielding prince saving a helpless, demure princess held allure for many audiences, the original story, said Kalanduyan, was much more empowering—the dance was originally about a princess saving herself from an earthquake. Furthermore, the crashing gongs and aggressive drums of folkloric presentations were far from the sophisticated kulintang music Kalanduyan grew up with in his native Mindanao; he aimed to teach kulintang as an art worthy of study, not just background sounds for dance.

During his concerts, Kalanduyan endeavored to show audiences the depth and breadth of a vital tradition that he was so dedicated to teaching note by note. At first, the interlocking rhythms, overlapping phrases, and microtonal tuning seemed entirely foreign to his American students. To help them understand, Danny compared the improvisatory nature and unfamiliar scales of kulintang music to jazz. Eventually, he mentored a number of dedicated students, including some featured on this collection, who came from jazz, rock, Afro-Brazilian, and other musical backgrounds. After learning traditional pieces like those featured on the first disc, these students began to fuse the unique sounds of kulintang into their own creative expressions.

Although this compilation does not represent all the new works that blend kulintang into other genres of music, it contains examples of the inventive ways that artists in the Philippine diaspora transform kulintang to enhance their own styles. Danny himself also collaborated with several artists on Disc 2. In these ways, creative innovations keep the living tradition of kulintang dynamic, fresh, and exciting for younger generations.

The collection concludes with Danny’s greatest legacy—his granddaughter Kim Kalanduyan’s continuation of a distinctive style of performing traditional kulintang music. Born in the Muslim enclave of Taguig, Philippines, but raised mainly in the US, Kim is the musical apprentice of Dr. Bernard Ellorin, Danny’s protégé, who embraced his master’s style. This album will continue to spread Danny’s mission to promote kulintang as a vital part of Philippine culture and inspire innovative work in the diaspora.
I. World Gong Crazy
Han Han featuring DATU: Haniely Pableo, lead vocals; Alexander Punzalan, lead vocals, producer; Romeo Candido, lead vocals, sarunay (small, high-pitched kulintang); Rudy Boquila, drums
From Han Han, 2014, self-released
Han Han is a Filipina Canadian emcee who uses rap and spoken word techniques to deliver her vocals in Filipino languages such as Tagalog and Cebuano. “World Gong Crazy” was nominated for “Best Song” at the Berlin Music Video Awards 2017. The song features the electronic-tribal music duo of Alexander Junior (Punzalan) and Romeo Candido called DATU.

2. Under the Moon
Kulintronica: Ronald Querian, kulintang, guitars; Bill Williams, keyboards, drum programming
From Till the Break of Gong, 2015, Gongs Away Music
This piece incorporates the melody of the Maranao kolintang piece “Kanditagaonan.” Ron Querian learned traditional kulintang music from “Master K” and toured with him for ten years before he experimented with combining the ancient gong tradition with computer music in Kulintronica. Master K performed with Kulintronica onstage at the Festival of Philippine Arts and Culture in 2013.

3. Gong Spirits
Gingee: Marjorie Light, kulintang, vocals, percussion
From Tambol, 2015, Party Time Society
Gingee is a DJ/producer, percussionist, and vocalist known for her unique take on global bass. Her work is a reflection of the sounds and cultures she was exposed to growing up in Los Angeles as well as the musical world of her Filipino ancestors and beyond.

4. Lapu Lapu’s Battle Preparation/Jihad
Fred Ho featuring the Asian American Art Ensemble and Kulintang Arts: Fred Ho, baritone and soprano saxophones, flute; Sam Furnace, alto and soprano saxophones, flute; Doug Harris, tenor sax, flute, alto flute, royal harption, various percussion; Mark Izu, contrabass; Jon Jang, piano; Fe Bongolan, vocals; Kulintang Arts: Danongan Kalanduyan, kulintang, vocals; Robert Henry, agong, vocals; James “Frank” Holder, dabakan, vocals; Joey Maliga, agong, vocals; Dana Nuñez, gandingan
From A Song for Manong, 1988, Asian Improv Records
Fred Ho (1957–2014) was a prominent composer, saxophonist, and bandleader as well as a writer and radical activist who mixed jazz with both pop-
ular and traditional elements of Afro-Asian culture. “Lapu Lapu’s Battle Preparation/Jihad” features the Kulintang Arts Ensemble, or “KulArts,” a presenter of traditional and Pilipino arts since 1985. Based in San Francisco, the group was founded by Robert L. Henry, Marcella Pabros, and Alleluia Panis. This medley combines two well-known songs. According to Ho’s description from the liner notes on the original release, “Lapu Lapu’s Battle Preparation” is a “Moslem [sic] chant accompanied by the agong and dabakan, performing an accelerated rhythm from the Maranao style.” “Jihad” is described as “the war of resistance to Spanish colonialism beginning in 1521 with the arrival of Magellan to the island of Mactan. Sinolog Kangungudan is performed simultaneously with new jazz.”

5. Kanditagaonan

Noh Buddies: Shigemi Komiyama, drums, vocals; Don Nguyen, electric bass, synthesizers, vocals; Michael Sasaki, electric guitars, percussion, vocals, production; Bob Henry, congas, vocals, electric bass, percussion, associate production; Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo, flutes, lead vocals, kulintang, taiko, synthesizers
From Noh Buddies, 1984, Sansuri Records

Noh Buddies was an Asian American “World Beat” band. Their music was a fusion of rock, jazz, and reggae interwoven with traditional Asian music, including Philippine kulintang and Japanese taiko, shakuhachi, and gagaku music. The melody is from the traditional Maranao kolintang piece “Kaditagaonan.”

6. Ditagaonan (Malong Mix)

Asian Crisis: Art Hirahara, piano; Jason Jong, gu (Chinese double-headed drum), taiko, percussion; John Kim, chang-gu (Korean double-headed drum); Francis “Kiko” Lacsamana, babandil, electric bass, kubing (bamboo jaw harp), kulintang; Meena Makhijani, tabla; with Leon Lee, flute
From Asian Crisis, 2004, self-released

Asian Crisis is Art Hirahara, Jason Jong, John Kim, Masaru Koga, Francis “Kiko” Lacsamana, and Meena Suresh Makhijani. The group’s work began in 1998 as a series of community-building jam sessions in Chinatown, Oakland, California, in which they aspired to contribute to a pan-Asian/Asian Pacific American political consciousness in contemporary arts and culture. Francis Lacsamana chose the melody of the Maranao piece “Kanditagaonan” because “Master Danny explained to me that this simple and melodically playful song was about a little girl who was not allowed to attend a village wedding because she couldn’t afford the required malong (women’s skirt)... I immediately equated this story with the historical discrimination Asian Americans have faced in this country.” Asian Crisis recorded an alternate version of this song (Mindanao Mix) for their self-titled 2004 album.

7. Afroyesa Maranaw

Bo Razón, guitars, dundun, gankogui (West African percussion); with Miisu Matute, kulintang; Ernesto Mazur Kindelán, bass; Greg Landau, drum programming
From The Saronay Sessions, 2019, Round Whirled Records

Bo Razón plays various instruments from around the world, especially Africa and the Philippines. He explains, “The tune fuses musical elements and instruments from West Africa, Cuba, North America, the Congo, and the Philippines. We were fascinated by how some Magindanao rhythms blended and meshed organically with some Afro-Caribbean & Afro-Brazilian motifs.”

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9. Tatao
royal hartigan, drum set; Danongan Kalanduyan, kulintang; Hafez Modirzadeh, soprano saxophone; Conrad Benedicto, dabakan
From ancestors, 2008, Innova Records
royal hartigan is a percussionist, pianist, and tap dancer who performs the music of Asia, Africa, Europe, West Asia, and the Americas, especially African American traditions. hartigan states, “(Danny) inspired my work in Philippine arts and culture as well as encouraged me to adapt the traditional elements into cross-cultural styles such as African American jazz and creative music.”

10. Unimpressed
Eleanor Academia, vocals, kulintang, keyboards, piano, dabakan; Brad Ayers, guitars; Gil Morales, bass; Dan Potruch, drums
From Oracle of the Black Swan, 1998, Black Swan Records
Eleanor Academia is a multi-award-winning solo recording artist, producer, composer, and arranger. Her song “Adventure” hit No. #1 on the Billboard Dance Club Songs chart (US/Germany) in 1988. She embeds kulintang melodies and rhythms into the heavy metal rock parts of guitar, bass, and drums and performs a solo on kulintang in the piece.

11. Tarabiangan Pt. 1
Florante Aguilar, kulintang, sarunay, agung, kagul, bungkaka, kubing, gambal, cajón, African shakers, Brazilian drums
From Maség, 2014, New Art Media
Aguilar’s compositions incorporate Philippine musical motifs to strike a balance between traditional and modern contexts. Aguilar is a recipient of National Endowment for the Arts and Gerbode Composition awards.

8. Binalig
Subla Neokulintang: Danongan Kalanduyan, kulintang; Bo Razón, guitar; Chris Trinidad, bass guitar; Frank Holder, dabakan and cajón (box-shaped percussion instrument originating in Peru)
From Subla Neokulintang, 2014, Iridium Records
Subla Neokulintang was created by Chris Trinidad, Bo Razón, Danny Kalanduyan, and Frank Holder. Subla means “beyond” in Danny’s native Magindanao language. Trinidad recalls, “Working with Danny on this project and others gave me a real sense of pride in being Filipino. His concept of music making is so deeply rooted in his tradition and yet he was very open to exploring future possibilities with his music.”
12. Binalig a Kulndet
Bernard Ellorin, kulintang; Danongan Kalanduyan, gandingan; Eric Abutin, dabakan
From Pakaraguian Kulintang Ensemble, 2006, self-released

Ellorin explains, “This version of binalig was taught to me by Kanapia Kalanduyan, the younger brother of Danongan. It combines embellishments unique to the Kalanduyan family and their village of Datu Piang, Cotabato.” Having studied with Guro Danny since the age of 12, Ellorin adds “He was like a father figure to me because I admired him for being adamant about the importance of kulintang music as an indigenous form of Philippine music that needs to be treated with integrity and respect.”

13. Duyog and Sinulog a Kamamatuan
Kim Kalanduyan, kulintang; Bernard Ellorin, babandil; Marlo Campos, dabakan; Rico Delmundo, gandingan; Eric Abutin, agung 1; Janet Asuncion, agung 2
Recorded in 2020, previously unreleased

Kim Kalanduyan is Danny’s eldest grandchild. Danny’s passing in 2016 compelled Kim to continue her family’s legacy of kulintang performance. She began her journey by studying with Dr. Bernard Ellorin with the support of an Alliance for California Traditional Arts grant in 2019. She says, “I am inspired every day by the memory of my grandfather and my love of our culture. My grandfather dedicated his life to sharing his culture and using it to educate Filipino Americans who were uprooted from their native culture.”

Typical Magindanao ensemble instruments (minus the babandil) demonstrated by the Pakaraguian Kulintang Ensemble, a group based in Southern California, started by Danny’s students. Photo by Don Crisostomo.
Kulintang gongs on decorated rack. Performer wears traditional cloth called malong. Photo by Mark Shigenaga.
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