MUSIC OF SULAWESI
Celebes Indonesia
Recorded by
Eric and Catherine Crystal
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ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS
FE 4351

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701 SEVENTH AVE., N.Y.C., U.S.A.
Music of Sulawesi, Sa'dan Toradja Region

Sulawesi (formerly termed Celebes) is the fourth of the great islands that comprise the Indonesian archipelago. Here extensive coastlines, vast inland plains and rugged mountain ranges harbor many disparate ethnic groups. The greatest concentration of population is situated on the southwest peninsula where the capital city, Makassar, links the island to the outside world. Some three hundred kilometers to the north, nestled in high mountain valleys or along terraced hillsides, are the homes of the three hundred thousand agriculturalists of the Sa'dan Toradja group. Isolated for centuries from contact with lowland Muslim neighbors to the south, the highland Toradja population maintains distinct linguistic, religious, and artistic traditions. Not until the dawn of the present century did the Dutch colonial power press entry into the Toradja region, finally suppressing armed resistance in the year 1907. Since that time the impact of missionary endeavor and the vicissitudes of history have inevitably wrought changes upon the traditional way of life. At present nearly half of the population has converted to Christianity, some ten percent of the inhabitants of Tana Toradja Regency reside in urban areas, external communication has been facilitated by an all weather motor road. And yet, the Toradja cultural heritage, preserved by the 150,000 determined adherents of the ancestral Aluk To Dolo faith, has remained intact and the legacy of the Toradja forbears continues to endure.

Music enjoys a position of prominence in both Toradja daily and ritual life. Traditional belief holds that good fortune will come to those who awaken to the first stirrings of the roosting cocks. Early risers summon their families to the chores of the new day with crisp, bird-like improvisations on the tulali short flute. Soon small boys will lead water buffalo to pasture and stream, other youngsters will make for the rice fields to guard the ripening grain against onslaughts of voracious pests or unattended bovines. Here in the rice fields with long hours away from home, the buffalo tenders fashion the karombi, a type of kazoo, out of bamboo and thin pineapple fiber.

When the fields have turned golden with the heavy grained rice stalks, the sounds of the pa'barrung resound from hilltop to hilltop across well-watered valleys. The pa'barrung horn is employed both casually and on important ritual occasions. In the hands of an expert the horn becomes a central feature of large ceremonies of harvest thanksgiving, spirit possession, and house consecration. The pa'barrung requires a full day to fabricate and can be employed for about a month until total dessication of its component parts renders it useless. The leaves of the sugar palm, twisted into a cone, form the horn of the instrument which is then affixed to a reed made from the innermost stalk of a rice plant. Fashioned from living green plants and played only as long as the suppleness of life remains locked within, the pa'barrung is the symbolic horn of the harvest.

Three other instruments are normally employed in conjunction with indigenous Toradja religious rites. The drum, not represented here, is used extensively but never in conjunction with other instruments. The gesok gesok, one stringed "violin", and the suling or long bamboo flute are prominently employed at significant ceremonial occasions.

The long flute, tipped with a horn of carved water buffalo horn, is most often played in groups of four. Villages in the western Toradja districts periodically celebrate a festival of health and well-being marking the past years which have been free from the plague of smallpox. A rite is dedicated to the spirit Puang Ma'ruruk who in a malevolent state is thought to visit such scourges upon inattentive rural communities. This deity, however, is believed to be especially fond of flute and gesok gesok music and so the rite held in his honor integrates sacrificial offerings with ritualized musical performance. The finest musicians are summoned from miles around to be heard and to compete among fellow artists. The ceremony to Puang Ma'ruruk then culminates in the staging of ritual cockfights and the sacrifice of hundreds of chickens. Performers partake of a communal meal before returning to natal household laden with gifts of specially prepared rice and chicken.

Whether played for personal distraction or for ritual purposes Toradja music reflects the human emotions and unswilled natural beauty characteristic of the highlands of south Sulawesi. These selections are representative of a musical tradition never before heard beyond the mountain fastness of the Sa'dan Toradja homeland. In sharing these performances with the world beyond we hope that a wide appreciation of Toradja tradition will in turn stimulate the preservation of the Toradja cultural heritage for many years to come.

Eric and Catherine Crystal
Eric and Catherine Crystal
Indonesia---Sulawesi

Guide to Master Tape (guide numbers from Sony TC 355 tape deck)

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Translation of Piece Names

Tutali
- pa'loi loi: the loi loi is a large bird with yellow-green feathers and a call like a blackbird.
- arri arri: a type of insect, very noisy, cicada like in sound.

Karombi
- pa'darra darra: rapids, swift flowing water
- pa'asu pangala: jungle dog, wild dog
- pa'bui lolong: flowing water
- pa'arrir arri: noisy insects

Pa'ba rrung
- pele to marara bunu': literally "Song of Those who Bloody the Rice sheaf binder" refers to ceremony of storing newly harvested rice for the coming year.
- pa'kapipe: the kapipe is a rice bag, according to the artist the song would be played by a youngster asking for some free rice (cooked) to be put into his woven kapipe bag.
- pa'pele to manglaa: song of the water buffalo tenders.
- pa'bassen bassen: meaning unclear, but presentation is meant to be humorous.

Suling
- pa'tulali: solo long flute imitating the tulali short flute; long flutes are rarely played individually, tulali flutes are never paired.
- pa'pasakke: the blessing, refers to ritual sprinkling of holy water as a final benediction at the end of several rituals.
- pa'nonni to mabua: sounds of the harvest festival
- panimbong: recollects the song of male choral groups at festivals celebrating the wealth and prosperity of villager household.
- pa'korrok to manimbong: trills of singers at ceremonies marking wealth and prosperity.
- pa'korong korong: chicken offering of the people of Bera village
- To Bera: roof raising, building a new house
- pa'katjappi: sounds of the katjappi stringed instrument
- pa'kau kau: kapok tree, this tree is used to make a ceremonial platform during funerals
- pa'daun lemo: grapefruit leaf----used as a sign of ritual purity during thanksgiving ritual
- pa'messina: the sewing machine.