

RECORDING AND DOCUMENTING MUSIC FOR THE HERITAGE INVENTORY  
OF SUAI-CAMENAÇA

by

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Recording and documenting music for the Heritage Inventory of Suai-Camenaça

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submitted by Aaron Pettigrew in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

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in Ethnomusicology

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## Abstract

From 2014-2016, the Timorese NGO *Timor Aid* conducted a multi-disciplinary research project in Timor-Leste to “[document] the cultural heritage of the peoples of Suai-Camenaça and surrounds who will be affected by the Tasi Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Project” (Timor Aid n.d.), scheduled to take place between 2011-2030 along the south coast (República Democrática de Timor-Leste 2011, 141). The Heritage Inventory sought to “document local culture and traditions including language, music, cultural geography, biodiversity, and textiles... before these practices are disrupted, changed, or lost as a result of this mega-infrastructure project” (Timor Aid n.d.).

In 2015, ethnomusicologist Philip Yampolsky led a small team of music researchers who traveled to Suai-Camenaça to document traditional music for the Heritage Inventory. The team visited several musical events over a period of 58 days to create audio and video recordings and to create written documentation from direct observation.

This thesis presents the research and findings of the music research team. It includes an overview of the history and geography of Timor-Leste and a brief introduction to the scope of the *Tasi Mane Petroleum Infrastructure Development Project*. A review of previous music research conducted in Timor-Leste places the work of the music research team in its scholarly context. Findings are presented alongside detailed documentation of the research methodology, and they include several musical practices and genres that had not previously been documented in scholarly work. The author uses Catherine Grant’s *Music Vitality and Endangerment Framework* (Grant 2014) to analyze the findings and create a preliminary assessment of the vitality of

traditional musical practices in Suai-Camenaça, and this assessment is discussed in the context of broader scholarly debate concerning endangerment and preservation in ethnomusicological research.

## Lay Summary

Suai-Camenaça is one of several sites of a large-scale infrastructure development project taking place on the south coast of Timor-Leste from 2011-2030. Concerned about the impacts of this development project on local cultural practices, the Timorese organization Timor Aid created a research project called the *Heritage Inventory of Suai-Camenaça* to document the language, music, cultural geography, biodiversity, and textiles of the area.

This thesis documents the work of a small team of music researchers who traveled to Suai-Camenaça in 2015 to document traditional music for the *Heritage Inventory*. It outlines the geographic, historical, and scholarly contexts for their work, it presents their research methods and findings, it offers an assessment of the vitality of the traditional musical practices they encountered, and it discusses some of the ethical issues that arise in this type of research.

## Preface

The material presented in this thesis is based on a music research program designed by the Timorese NGO Timor Aid and ethnomusicologist Philip Yampolsky as part of Timor Aid's multi-disciplinary *Heritage Inventory of Suai-Camenaça*. In 2015 I worked in Timor-Leste as a member of the three-person music research team that undertook to do this research. Our work was to make audio recordings, video recordings, photographs, and written documentation of musical events for the *Heritage Inventory*. Philip Yampolsky oversaw the creation of audio recordings and written documentation. I assisted Philip in the creation of audio recordings and written documentation, and I made video recordings and photographs. Tinuk Yampolsky made additional video recordings and photographs. Philip Yampolsky and I worked closely together afterward to analyze the data that the three of us collected.

Much of the material in Chapter 2 was included in an exhibit titled "Music of Timor: Recordings, Documentation, and Recent Research" that Yampolsky and I curated for the *Indonesia and Timor-Leste Studies Committee for the Association of Asian Studies 2017 Annual Conference* in Toronto, Canada. See Pettigrew, Aaron, and Philip Yampolsky. 2017. "Music of Timor: Recordings, Documentation, and Recent Research." Exhibit presented at the Association of Asian Studies' Indonesia and Timor-Leste Studies Committee Pre-Conference Workshop, Toronto, ON. All of the written material presented in Chapter 2 is my original work except where I have indicated otherwise.

The findings presented in Chapter 3 were included in an unpublished research brief co-written by Philip Yampolsky, Tinuk Yampolsky, and me, and submitted to Timor

Aid in 2016. See Yampolsky, Philip, Tinuk Yampolsky, and Aaron Pettigrew. 2016. “REVISED Narrative Report to Timor Aid.” Unpublished report. All of the written material in Chapter 3 is my original work except where I have indicated otherwise.

I presented a summary version of the findings and discussion included in Chapters 3 and 4 at the 4<sup>th</sup> *Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia* in Penang, Malaysia, in 2016, and a version of the presentation (including Table 3.1) was subsequently published in the conference proceedings. See Pettigrew, Aaron. 2017. “Assessing the Vitality of Traditional Music Practice in Southwestern Timor-Leste.” In *Proceedings of the 4th Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia*, 67–69. Penang, Malaysia: School of the Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia.

The tables used in Chapter 4 are taken from Catherine Grant’s *Music Endangerment: How Language Maintenance Can Help*, published in 2014 by Oxford University Press. See Grant, Catherine. 2014. *Music Endangerment: How Language Maintenance Can Help*. New York: Oxford University Press. All tables are reproduced with permission of the Licensor through PLSclear. All of the written material in Chapter 4 is my original work except where I have indicated otherwise.

All photographs were taken by the author. Audio and video recordings gathered for the *Heritage Inventory* are not included here; they are archived with Timor Aid and have not been published.

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To all of you (and to anyone else that I haven't mentioned): thank you so much. I am a very lucky guy.

# 1 Introduction

In the summer of 2015 I was invited to work with ethnomusicologist Philip Yampolsky on the south coast of Timor-Leste (East Timor). I was part of a small music research team that spent about two months in and around a place called Suai, in the district of Covalima, recording and documenting traditional music for a multi-disciplinary project called the *Heritage Inventory of Suai-Camenaça* (Sarmiento 2015).

I arrived in Timor-Leste in July. Before that, other than squirming my way through a few last-minute vaccinations, I'd done little to prepare, really. On the advice of my advisors, I had made few plans in advance of this trip, thinking I'd just let the experience be what it was, to see what I would learn. I was off to work with Philip Yampolsky (of Smithsonian fame), to apprentice, I suppose. I was going to learn what it can mean to be an ethnomusicologist.

I met Philip when he visited a class I that I was attending at the University of British Columbia in 2014. I had a chance to share a few transcriptions I'd done of his recordings, music from the Upper Jelai River in Kalimantan, Indonesia, collected on volume 17 of the renowned *Music of Indonesia* series he recorded in the 1990s (Yampolsky 1998a). The Upper Jelai pieces are very interesting recordings, featuring an ensemble of bamboo "concussion tubes" or tuned lengths of bamboo, pounded together in phrases of seven and eleven beats, recorded deep in the forest during an agricultural ceremony called *besenggayung* (ibid.). I chose these recordings because I liked the music: it was a bit different, I thought, even from many of the other unfamiliar genres that make up the series. By great coincidence it turned out that Philip had written about these very recordings in an important paper called "Can the Traditional Arts Survive,

and Should They?,” arguing that their complexity—the difficulty involved for outside listeners in apprehending the patterns in this music—could show “what traditional music can do for us” (Yampolsky 2001, 183). For outsiders, hearing *different* music such as this, Philip wrote, can “suggest the possibility that life can be lived differently” (ibid.).

The transcriptions I made showed recurring patterns in the four recordings Philip had made of this music, making it a little easier to understand what was going on. Philip appreciated my work and we got along very well, our half-hour appointment stretching toward something more like two hours. Later, as he hurried out of his final presentation to catch a plane to Manila, he looked at me and said “come to Indonesia.” I hadn’t thought about it before, really, but I started to—a lot. We continued to correspond and I did some more transcription work for him, and eventually (and with a helpful nudge from my supervisor) he invited me to come live and work with him and his wife, Tinuk, in East Timor.

## 1.1 Timor-Leste

That was in my first year as a master’s student in ethnomusicology, and I knew literally nothing about East Timor, or Timor-Leste, as I soon learned that it is now called. I had a notion that Timor was somehow politically charged: the name shared a space in my mind with Tibet, of all places, evoking vague memories of causes taken up by the Beastie Boys and Rage Against the Machine and some of the other bands I listened to in the mid-to-late ’90s.

As it turns out, Timor is actually pretty far from Tibet. It is an independent country in maritime southeast Asia. It mostly occupies the eastern half of the island of Timor,

and the western half of the island is part of the Indonesian province of Nusa Tenggara Timur.<sup>1</sup> It's a small country, the size of the state of Connecticut (or, for a Canadian comparison, a little less than half the size of Vancouver Island), and it sits about 500 km north of the northern tip of Australia.

The border that separates Indonesia and Timor-Leste is a legacy of Portuguese and Dutch colonial occupation from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> While the two of them jockeyed for control of the island's profitable sandalwood forests during much of the colonial period,<sup>3</sup> most of what is now Timor-Leste was mainly under Portuguese rule from the mid-1500s until the mid-1970s.

The Portuguese didn't engage in much development in what was then known as Portuguese Timor. Where they took an interest, they used forced labour to extract resources, and there were numerous disruptive and costly battles over the centuries between the Portuguese and various groups of Timorese. This was not typical settler-colonialism, though, and in many ways much of the area outside of the capital, Dili, remained relatively uninfluenced by foreign rule for a long time. The Catholic church did make inroads everywhere, and today most East Timorese are practicing Catholics, though a large number of those people—especially those living in rural areas—practice traditional Timorese religious rites as well (NSD 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> There's also a small enclave located on the western half of the island called Oecusse that belongs to Timor-Leste.

<sup>2</sup> Much of this history is available from several sources, making it a bit difficult to cite specific authors for this section. McWilliam and Traube (2011) give a good overview of Timorese history in the introduction to their book *Land and Life in Timor-Leste*, as do many other ethnographic texts. For more detailed histories, Leach (2016) and Durand (2016) are fairly recent, Molnar (2010) is worthwhile, and Gunn (1999) is helpful up to independence. The 2500-page *Final Report of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR)* (2006) offers a very different sort of history.

<sup>3</sup> Some consider this term to be wrongly applied for portions of this timeline, suggesting the term "contact period" may be more appropriate (see Molnar 2010, 27-34 e.g.).

In 1974, the Portuguese government fell in a military coup, and the new Portuguese government moved quickly to withdraw from its overseas colonies. In December 1975, with the Portuguese gone, the Indonesian military invaded East Timor, and their bloody, devastating military occupation lasted 24 years. The country became a part of Indonesia, and its citizens were forced to learn the Indonesian language, to attend Indonesian schools, and to abandon their traditional cultural practices (see Leach 2016). Many people were killed by the Indonesian military, and many more died of hunger and disease (CAVR 2006).

There was significant armed and civilian resistance to the Indonesian occupation in Timor-Leste (see Fernandes 2011, Cristalis 2009, and CAVR 2006, among many others). After years of dogged, costly fighting and under increasing international pressure from activists and governments abroad, the Timorese people finally gained the right to independence in a referendum held in September 1999. In retaliation, the Indonesian military slashed and burned much of the country as they left, killing and wounding many people, and in some cases setting entire villages on fire (Leach 2016; CAVR 2006). In late 1999, after Indonesia left, the United Nations formed a transitional government, and in 2002 Timor-Leste officially became Southeast Asia's newest country.

When I talk to people in Canada about East Timor, they sometimes remember bits and pieces of the news coverage from the 1990s. They usually say something about a genocide, and some people mention Jose Ramos-Horta and Bishop Belo, Timorese men who shared the Nobel Peace Prize for their activism in 1996. Some mention Amy Goodman and Allan Nairn, American journalists who helped to publicize

the brutality of the Indonesian occupation in the early '90s. Most people ask what ever happened to East Timor, and they often wonder what it is like there now, whether it is stable and safe.

I tell them that it does seem to be, but it is not easy to become a new country at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first ten years of governance were rocky, with occasional political violence, especially around 2006 and 2008, and the United Nations stayed on in an advisory capacity until 2012 (see Leach 2016 and Feijó 2014). Timor-Leste is still not a tourist destination, but many international travel advisories have been lifted since independence, and there are now direct flights from Singapore, Bali, and Darwin, Australia.

Much of Timor-Leste is still very poor, though, and the living is hard (UNDP 2016). People don't have a lot to eat, especially in rural areas, life expectancy is low, and many families are still recovering from the wreckage of the Indonesian occupation (ibid.). The statistics are grim and the history is hard, but the people are strong.

## 1.2 The Heritage Inventory of Suai-Camenaça

Many locals say that the island of Timor is a crocodile—called *avo*, or grandfather, in Tetun—whose “mountainous backbone” stretches east-west (Gunn 1999, 13). Jagged, rocky vertebrae rise out of the misty valleys of the central interior; cattle graze the steep green sides of craggy peaks that suddenly drop off to river beds far below. The north coast is a dry, scaly landscape of dramatic cliffs and steep, dusty slopes, while in the south the mountains slide more gradually toward coastal plains, wide rivers, lush, tropical forests, and, eventually, the sea.

Our work was to record and document traditional music on the south coast, in an area called Suai Villa, Suai Kota, or often just Suai, for a project called the *Heritage Inventory of Suai-Camenaça* (Sarmiento 2015). The Heritage Inventory was created by a Timorese organization called Timor Aid to assess and document artistic and cultural practices in Suai, partly because many of these practices had not previously been documented, and partly because of concern over the potential impacts of massive petroleum infrastructure developments taking place in the region (ibid.).

Timor-Leste is currently investing heavily to develop capacity for domestic petroleum extraction and refinement, and the centerpiece of this strategy is something called the *Tasi Mane* project, which involves the construction of extensive infrastructure on the south coast (República Democrática de Timor-Leste 2011). Suai is one of three main sites of the Tasi Mane developments; government documents imagine the area as a “national industrial base and logistics platform to drive job creation and economic development on the south coast” (ibid. 141). To that end, from 2011-2030 the government and the national petroleum company together aim to build a seaport, a heavy metals workshop, and shipbuilding and repair facilities in Suai (ibid.).

Construction to expand the local airport and increase its capacity was completed in 2017 (República Democrática de Timor-Leste 2017), and there are additional plans to construct a small city called Nova Suai to provide housing and accommodation for workers (República Democrática de Timor-Leste 2011).

The Tasi Mane construction and renovation requires land, and government expropriation of the land has resulted in the displacement and relocation of many

families and communities in Suai (Timor-Leste Institute 2015a, 2015b)<sup>4</sup>. The Heritage Inventory of Suai-Camenaça was created in part to investigate the extent to which the development and related displacement associated with the Tasi Mane project are impacting local traditional cultural practices in the area (Sarmiento 2015). The project included research from experts in language, architecture, textile arts, cultural anthropology, and, of course, music (ibid.).

This thesis describes my work with the *Heritage Inventory*. Chapter 1 provided some useful background information: I talked about how I got started working with Philip, I gave a brief overview of the history and geography of Timor-Leste, and I introduced the context for the Heritage Inventory. In Chapter 2 I review relevant literature from ethnomusicology and other disciplines, situating our research among other survey and documentary work that has produced recordings on the island of Timor. In Chapter 3 I review our research in some detail. I outline our basic findings, listing the various music genres we encountered; I spend some time discussing our methods, recounting what it was like to attend and record at the Tetun wakes that made up the bulk of our work; and I talk about some of the goals and challenges of our research, recalling the kinds of conversations we had together as the project unfolded. In Chapter 4 I discuss our findings, borrowing a tool from Catherine Grant (2014) to assess the materials and draw some basic conclusions. I situate that discussion within a broader conversation about the ethics of preservation in ethnomusicology and anthropology, ending with a reflection on the implications of these ethical considerations for ethnomusicological research.

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<sup>4</sup> For more on the Tasi Mane project and its impacts on those living in Suai-Camenaça, see Bovensiepen, Felipe, and Freitas (2016), Bovensiepen and Nygaard-Christensen (2018), and Crespi and Guillaud (2018).

## 2 Literature Review

The *Heritage Inventory* was the first significant research project designed specifically to survey traditional music practice in Suai.<sup>5</sup> It also remains one of the more substantial surveys of Timorese music to date. This is not to say that it was a more comprehensive project than others; rather, that there is relatively little scholarship on the music of Timor with which it could be compared. While some scholars working on the island of Timor have produced significant work that deals in passing with music and musical practice (David Hicks (2004), several authors in McWilliam & Traube (2011), e.g.), few have sought to document and discuss music itself.

Below is a selection of relevant academic and other research from Timor that has produced publications dealing specifically, or at least substantially, with music. Most have also produced audio or video recordings. These materials have all been published in (or translated into) English or French, and all of the researchers whose work is featured here are, it should be noted, from outside of Timor. I recognize that much valuable scholarship on Timor has been done by researchers who publish in other languages (especially Tetun, Portuguese, and Dutch); nevertheless, my limited understanding of those languages places such work beyond the scope of this review.

Materials are listed by author/researcher, and each entry begins with a brief biographical note.<sup>6</sup> I have organized entries here chronologically, based on the dates of

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<sup>5</sup> This study maintains a distinct focus on Timorese traditional music (rather than, say, popular music or liturgical music). Recognizing that the term “traditional music” has been widely debated in the ethnomusicological literature, I use as my criteria for inclusion the definitions of traditional music offered in Yampolsky’s “Can the Traditional Arts Survive, and Should They?” (2001): traditional music is that which shows little “obvious foreign... influence in its musical idiom” (175).

<sup>6</sup> In 2016-17 I curated an exhibit that reviewed recordings and scholarly writing on music from the island of Timor, and I presented the exhibit in March 2017 at the ITLSC pre-conference workshop at the Association of Asian Studies annual conference in Toronto (see Pettigrew and Yampolsky 2017). The

a given researcher's earliest engagement with Timor and on those of any relevant publications. While the research presented here describes music from both sides of the island, the research chronology can be divided into three periods roughly correspondent with the periods before, during, and after the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste. The body of music research that dates from before the Indonesian invasion in 1975 touches both sides of the border, and it includes the early survey work of Jaap Kunst (who visited Timor in 1932), the multi-disciplinary work of a research team called *l'Equipe Timor*, and the ethnographic work of Margaret King-Boyes. From the time of the Indonesian occupation in 1975 until the transition to Independence in 2002, little music-related research was undertaken on the eastern half of the island. While both Sri Hastanto and Louise Byrne recorded a few pieces of music in Timor-Leste during this period, the most substantial research projects of this time were undertaken in Indonesian Timor by Christopher Basile, Philip Yampolsky, and Margaret Kartomi.

Research in Indonesian Timor has continued since 2002, and there has been a marked increase in music-related research activities in Timor-Leste since independence, particularly since 2009. This period saw the publication of survey work from Ros Dunlop, substantial recording and documentation projects undertaken by Philip Yampolsky and by the NGO Many Hands International, and video recording projects from David Palazón and Palmer Keen.

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*Traditional Music of Timor* exhibit aimed to give a thorough account of the research and recordings that have been conducted to date on both sides of the island. Exhibit materials were presented to workshop participants on iPads and headphones using an open access website.

## 2.1 Research Prior to 1975

### 2.1.1 Jaap Kunst

Jaap Kunst was a pioneering Dutch musicologist and researcher, widely considered to be a “founder of modern ethnomusicology” (Hood 2001). From 1919-1934, Kunst recorded and documented music in what was then known as the Dutch East Indies. While his work in the 1920s focused on the music of Java and Bali, from 1930-1934 he traveled more extensively, gathering musical recordings, materials, and documentation from around the archipelago (Kunst 1994).

In 1932, Kunst traveled to Timor to collect instruments and to make recordings. He appears to have recorded at least two wax cylinders in Belu villages in Atambua, both of which are now archived at the Jaap Kunst Ethnomusicology Centre in Amsterdam (Kunst 1994).<sup>7</sup> The titles of the cylinders are listed as “Manulea” and “Lolilo;” Manulea is the name of a region in what is now Indonesian Timor, while the significance of Lolilo is a mystery.<sup>8</sup>

Kunst wrote briefly about Timorese music and dance in his essay “Muziek en dans in de Buitengewesten” (1946), an English translation of which is found in the book *Indonesian Music and Dance: Traditional Music and its Interaction with the West* (1994). His passages about Timor are limited to four short paragraphs in a section on the music of Nusa Tenggara. He likens Atoni musical traditions to those found on Flores, and he

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<sup>7</sup> These cylinders are numbered 293 and 294. Kunst (1994) lists additional cylinders recorded by Middlekoop in Kapan in Central Timor: numbers 312-(?)316 and 322-327. These are from “Central Kapan Atoni,” their titles are “recitation,” and there is a remark, “Letter Kunst to Dr. K. Halusa 5-5-36” (270).

<sup>8</sup> To my knowledge, these recordings are not available online and I have never heard them. Interested listeners should contact the library at the University of Amsterdam for more information: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/home>.

gives the names of several instruments, including the *sasando*, a bamboo-and-palm zither imported from neighbouring Rote; a wooden rattle (*flolo*); a bamboo jew's harp (*knobe oh*); a xylophone (*sene hauh*); a six-stringed bamboo tube zither (*sene kaka*); an ocarina (*feku*); several bamboo flutes (*bobi*, *foé*, *semaku*); buffalo horns (*knite*); single-headed drums; gongs; and a pan-flute. He makes a similarly brief list of *Belu* instruments found on both sides of the border, noting "small mouth harps (*kakeit*), small kettle drums (*tihar*, *bibiliku*), middle-hole flutes (*foe dole*) and six-stringed bamboo zithers (*dadako*)" (ibid.)<sup>9</sup>. Photographs of the *sasando* (fig. 39), *sene hau* (fig. 40), *feku* (fig. 41), and pan flute (fig. 29) are included, and these instruments are presumably archived in the Kunst Ethnomusicology Centre.<sup>10</sup>

Kunst makes the briefest mention of two genres of dance: an Atoni war dance (*meos*), and "the flirtatious meandering dances of the young Belu girls" (Kunst, 189), very likely the dance many know as *likurai*.

### 2.1.2 Louis Berthe

Louis Berthe was a French ethnologist and researcher at the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris. He conducted fieldwork on Timor for 18 months in 1957-59, studying the social organization of Bunaq communities in the Lamaknen district of Indonesia (Berthe 1972), and he returned to Lamaknen in 1966 as head of the first mission of the multi-disciplinary research team informally known as

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<sup>9</sup> According to Yampolsky, *bibiliku* are single-headed conical drums, not kettle drums as the translation suggests.

<sup>10</sup> The third edition of Kunst's *Ethnomusicology* (1969) includes the same images of the *feku* (fig. 55) and the pan flute (fig. 57).

*l'équipe Timor* (Berthe-Friedberg et al. 1972).<sup>11</sup> Berthe's research interests were wide-ranging, and his publications included articles on Bunaq language, the complexities of Bunaq marriage-exchange, and Bunaq myth.

Berthe's article, "Sur Quelques Distiques Buna' (Timor Central)" (1959), is his most extensive publication on the subject of Timorese music. In it, he writes about the many occasions for which groups sing in Lamaknen. Each of these occasions—including celebrations, harvest festivals, funerals, and daily work—is the inspiration for innumerable poetic couplets, created and sung to accompany each specific event. The article includes transcriptions and translations of the texts of several of these couplets, and Berthe gives brief descriptions of singing for *tei* round dances, the *ipi-lete* harvest festival, and *kawen* funeral singing.

In his posthumously published *Bei Gua, Itinéraire des Ancêtres: Mythes des Bunaq de Timor* (Berthe 1972), Berthe briefly describes the performance of what he calls the "itineraries of the ancestors" (49; *les itinéraires des ancêtres*), a genre which is often performed at funerals or at celebrations to mark the construction of a new house. He talks about the role of Bunaq bards, called *Lal Gomo*, the "guardians of custom and genealogy" (49), and he describes how a *Lal Gomo* leads a chorus of singers through the melodies and texts of the songs.

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<sup>11</sup> L'équipe Timor was a team of researchers from France and Portugal that conducted coordinated, multi-disciplinary research in various locations in Timor in the 1960s. Supported by the French Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, the team consisted of five members: Louis Berthe (ethnology); Claudine Berthe-Friedberg (ethnobiology); Brigitte Clamagirand (social anthropology); and Henri Campagnolo and Maria-Olímpia Lameiras-Campagnolo (linguistic and economic anthropology). As a team, the *équipe Timor* took two trips together, one in 1966, and another in 1969-70 (though Berthe died in 1968). Each member of the team produced audio recordings of music and dance, and each wrote to varying degrees about the musical traditions they observed. Relevant works are briefly discussed below. Details about the team and its approach are available in Berthe-Friedberg et al. (1972), Berthe (1972), and in the introduction to Campagnolo (1979).

Berthe made over two hundred audio recordings of Bunaq songs and recitations, all of which are now archived at the Centre de Recherche en Ethnomusicologie in Nanterre.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the basic collection, the archive maintains a curated montage of thirteen recordings, presumably compiled by for an LP that was never published. These include examples of the *tei*, *ipi-lete*, and *kawen* songs mentioned above.

Berthe also collected several instruments from Timor, which are archived at the musée du quai Branly in Paris.<sup>13</sup> The collection includes three types of drums (*boba*, *baba-dook* [listed as *teberai*], and *olo-olo*), two types of flutes (*he'u gemel* and *zamel*), and a metal jew's harp (*keit besi*); descriptive notes are provided by Berthe (Berthe n.d.).

### 2.1.3 Margaret King-Boyes

Margaret King-Boyes (who first published as Margaret King) was an Australian anthropologist who conducted ethnographic survey work in Portuguese Timor in 1960-61. The results of her ethnographic work were published in her book *From Eden to Paradise* (King 1963), which includes a chapter on “Music, Song and Dance.” She describes many genres of dance and music from Timor, contrasting the “beautiful geometric patterns” and dramatic flair of the Eagle Dance of At Sabe with the “powerful

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<sup>12</sup> All of CREM's audio recordings are available on their website: <http://archives.crem-cnrs.fr>. Berthe's recordings are organized into two collections: 115 vocal and instrumental recordings from 1957-59 (CNRSMH\_I\_1970\_069), and 83 from 1966 (CNRSMH\_I\_1970\_068). A curated montage of selections from these recordings is also available (CNRSMH\_I\_1973\_016).

<sup>13</sup> Images and descriptions of the instruments are available on the museum's website: [http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/explore-collections/base/Work/?orderby=default&order=desc&category=oeuvres&tx\\_mqbcollection\\_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Btype%5D=&tx\\_mqbcollection\\_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bclassification%5D=&tx\\_mqbcollection\\_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bexemplaire%5D=&filters\[\]=Berthe%20Louis%7C1%7C&filters\[\]=timor%7C0%7Cet&filters\[\]=instrument%7C2%7Cet](http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/explore-collections/base/Work/?orderby=default&order=desc&category=oeuvres&tx_mqbcollection_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Btype%5D=&tx_mqbcollection_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bclassification%5D=&tx_mqbcollection_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bexemplaire%5D=&filters[]=Berthe%20Louis%7C1%7C&filters[]=timor%7C0%7Cet&filters[]=instrument%7C2%7Cet). The CREM website lists additional folders of notes, photographs, and fieldwork materials from Berthe's travels in Indonesia ([https://archives.crem-cnrs.fr/archives/fonds/CNRSMH\\_Berthe/](https://archives.crem-cnrs.fr/archives/fonds/CNRSMH_Berthe/)), but the contents are not available online at present.

and rhythmically “complex” traditions of Lautém (131), and she assesses the gender roles that performers enact in these and other dance genres. There are a few pages in which King-Boyes describes musical instruments and their uses, including a “*lulic* drum, made in the shape of a human torso” (134) and the *queuqueuquepere*, a bamboo tube zither used as part of traditional healing processes (136).

One gets a sense that King-Boyes is deeply moved by Timorese music. Drawing comparisons to Bach, she writes that “the musical life of the Timorese possesses a richness and complexity of structure and design surpassed only by their fine textiles. For the person fortunate to penetrate beyond the apparent monotonous repetition it provides a rare and rewarding experience” (130).

King-Boyes’ short paper “The Eagle Dance of At Sabe” (1965) describes one of the dances she observed in her fieldwork in Ermera in 1960-61. “The dance,” she writes, “is a mimed performance of the hunting and defence of nesting eagles” (49), dramatizing the defence of Timor against attacking outsiders. She discusses the choreography of the dance, and impressive hand-drawn figures illustrate the dancers’ steps. The article includes a musical transcription of the drum and gong patterns that accompany the dance (50), and King-Boyes describes the drums themselves, called *tipalu*, and the gongs, which she notes “are usually of Chinese origin” (50).

The State Library of South Australia has archived a collection of King-Boyes’ audio recordings, including many made during her travels in Timor.<sup>14</sup> A summary of materials lists reel-to-reel recordings from Dili, Lospalos, Tutuala, Iliomar, Lautem, Baucau, At Sabe, Viqueque, and Atauro (State Library of South Australia n.d.).

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<sup>14</sup> These recordings are not currently available online, so listening is reserved for those who can visit the library in Adelaide.

#### 2.1.4 Henri Campagnolo and Maria-Olímpia Lameiras-Campagnolo

Henri Campagnolo and Maria-Olímpia Lameiras-Campagnolo conducted linguistic and economic anthropological research together as members of the *équipe Timor* in 1966 and 1969-70 (Berthe-Friedberg et al. 1972). After an initial unsuccessful engagement in Laclubar, the Campagnolos chose to work with Fataluku communities in the east (Campagnolo 1979).

In the late 1970s, the Campagnolos co-authored an article called “Rythmes et genres dans la littérature orale des Fataluku de Lorehe (Timor Oriental)” (1979). The article presents a detailed analysis of the “verbal scores” (21; *partitions verbales*) of several Fataluku songs (though the authors explicitly state that their interest is in the songs’ “non-musical” traits [21]). They describe two principal poetic forms that occur in Fataluku song, and they outline the distributions and stress-patterns of syllables that form the meter of each verse form. The language is dense and the subject is fairly esoteric, but the article nonetheless comprises one of the most in-depth treatments of the poetic forms used in any Timorese vocal music to date.<sup>15</sup>

The Campagnolos made many audio recordings in the course of their work, all of which are now archived at the Centre de Recherche en Ethnomusicologie in Nanterre.<sup>16</sup> While some of the recordings document only spoken language or conversation, many

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<sup>15</sup> Yampolsky’s Fataluku research in 2011, 2012, and 2019 revisits this topic in detail.

<sup>16</sup> The Campagnolos’ field recordings are organized into a single collection of 121 recordings made in 1966 (CNRSMH\_I\_1971\_028).

others feature music, and there are numerous examples of the Fataluku genre of sung poetry known as *vaihoho*.<sup>17</sup>

The musée du quai Branly in Paris is home to a collection of 24 musical instruments the Campagnolos collected in the course of their travels.<sup>18</sup> The collection includes three types of flute (*oioilu*, *papan-oioilu*, and *kaihoi*), several bamboo-and-palm clarinets (*keke*), two metal gongs (*cacilu*), a metal ankle bell (*vili*), two suspended wooden xylophones (*kakalo*), two wooden drums (*tipalu*), two bamboo string-pull jew's-harps (*pepuru*), a cow-horn trumpet (*arap-horu*), and a large mortar used for music at marriage ceremonies (*alutu*). The collection includes notes with brief comments and details of the names, size, and construction of the instruments (Campagnolo and Lameiras-Campagnolo n.d.).

### 2.1.5 Brigitte Clamagirand

Brigitte Clamagirand (who also published as Brigitte Renard-Clamagirand) conducted ethnographic research with Ema (Kemak) communities in Marobo in central Timor. She was a member of the multidisciplinary *équipe Timor* in 1966 and 1969-70, and she authored several studies of Ema social organization, most notably “The Social Organization of the Ema of Timor” (1980) and *Marobo: une société ema de Timor* (1982).

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<sup>17</sup> Rappoport uses some of these recordings as the basis for a comparison of Fataluku and Lamaholot duet traditions in her article “Music as evidence of settlement: the case of diphonic singing in Eastern Indonesia (Eastern Flores, Eastern Timor)” (2015).

<sup>18</sup> Images and descriptions of the instruments are available on the museum’s website:

[http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/explore-collections/base/Work/action/list/mode/thumb/?orderby=default&order=desc&category=oeuvres&tx\\_mqbcollection\\_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Btype%5D=&tx\\_mqbcollection\\_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bclassification%5D=Instrument+de+musique&tx\\_mqbcollection\\_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bexemplaire%5D=&filters\[\]=Mathieu%20Charles%20Henry%20Campagnolo%7C1&refreshFilters=true&refreshModePreview=true](http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/explore-collections/base/Work/action/list/mode/thumb/?orderby=default&order=desc&category=oeuvres&tx_mqbcollection_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Btype%5D=&tx_mqbcollection_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bclassification%5D=Instrument+de+musique&tx_mqbcollection_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bexemplaire%5D=&filters[]=Mathieu%20Charles%20Henry%20Campagnolo%7C1&refreshFilters=true&refreshModePreview=true)

Clamagirand made many audio recordings in the course of her work, all of which are archived at the Centre de Recherche en Ethnomusicologie in Nanterre.<sup>19</sup> The French record label *Le Chant du Monde* published a collection of fourteen of these recordings on an LP called *Chants des Ema* (Clamagirand 1979), part a series called *Editions Musée de l'Homme-CNRS*. The LP has long since passed out of print, but the recordings and liner notes are available at CREM.

The recordings are well made and engaging. A few selections of note include “De sanu soin sala” (“Unfolding the path of wealth”), an incantation to attract wealth to the community; “Su mate” (“Guiding the Dead”), in which the “master of the word” sings the deceased “up to the entrance of the dwelling place of the dead” (4); “Nago besi,” a solo on iron jew’s harp; and “Tei anan” and “Cantiga,” ironic “little songs” of love and bitterness, sung by groups of adolescents gathered together at night (3). The liner notes also offer some general observations on the relationship of singing to ritual in Marobo.

Clamagirand collected several musical instruments in her travels, and these are now housed at the musée du quai Branly in Paris.<sup>20</sup> The nine musical instruments in the collection include two types of flute (*genu* and *be’u* or *gèu*); a metal gong with mallet (*kon*); a wooden drum (*dudu ba’o*); and five jew’s harps, two of bamboo and string, and

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<sup>19</sup> Clamagirand’s field recordings are organized into two collections: 63 from 1966 (CNRSMH\_I\_1971\_033), and 143 from 1969-70 (CNRSMH\_I\_1976\_003). CREM’s archive also includes a collection with the selections used to create *Chants des Ema* and digital versions of the 4-page LP jacket with notes and photos (CNRSMH\_E\_1979\_004\_003).

<sup>20</sup> Images and descriptions of the instruments are available on the museum’s website: [http://www.quaibrany.fr/en/explore-collections/base/Work/action/list/?orderby=default&order=desc&category=oeuvres&tx\\_mqbcollection\\_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Btype%5D=&tx\\_mqbcollection\\_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bclassification%5D=Instrument+de+musique&tx\\_mqbcollection\\_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bexemplaire%5D=&filters\[\]=Brigitte%20Clamagirand%7C1%7C&refreshFilters=true](http://www.quaibrany.fr/en/explore-collections/base/Work/action/list/?orderby=default&order=desc&category=oeuvres&tx_mqbcollection_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Btype%5D=&tx_mqbcollection_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bclassification%5D=Instrument+de+musique&tx_mqbcollection_explorer%5Bquery%5D%5Bexemplaire%5D=&filters[]=Brigitte%20Clamagirand%7C1%7C&refreshFilters=true)

three of metal (all listed as *Nago besi*). Included notes give the names, size, and construction of the instruments (Clamagirand n.d.).

#### 2.1.6 Claudine Friedberg

Claudine Friedberg (who also published as Claudine Berthe-Friedberg) was a professor of ethnobiology and biogeography at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris and a laboratory director at the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). Friedberg's research focused on Bunaq communities in Lamaknen, where she undertook fieldwork as part of the *équipe Timor* in 1966 and 1969-70 and on her own from 1971-73.

While Friedberg's specialty was ethnobiology, she made several audio recordings in Timor and all are now archived at the Centre de Recherche en Ethnomusicologie in Nanterre<sup>21</sup>. These include recordings of *likurai* drum ensembles, various recitations, and many types of singing—most notably a remarkable collection of *holek* melodies recorded on late-night excursions to collect wild honey.

Friedberg also edited Berthe's posthumous *Bei Gua, Itinéraire des Ancêtres: Mythes des Bunaq de Timor* (1972), discussed in the entry for Berthe above.

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<sup>21</sup> Friedberg's recordings are organized into three collections: 13 from 1969-70 (CNRSMH\_I\_1971\_005), 109 from 1969-71 (CNRSMH\_I\_1973\_003), and 4 from 1973 (CNRSMH\_I\_1986\_007). These audio recordings are only available for online listening by special permission; interested listeners should write to the archive manager: [http://archives.crem-cnrs.fr/pages/legal\\_notices](http://archives.crem-cnrs.fr/pages/legal_notices)

## 2.2 Research from 1975–2002

### 2.2.1 Louise Byrne

Louise Byrne is an Australian activist who became involved with the movement for East Timorese independence in 1989. In 1996-1997, Byrne made several recordings in East Timor. Byrne contributed her recordings and wrote liner notes for these and other tracks on *Tata-hateke ba dok—Grandfather, looking for the future* (Byrne 1998), a CD of Timorese music published as part of a series by Tradisom called Journey of Sounds.<sup>22</sup>

*Tata-hateke ba dok* includes a diverse collection of recordings of both traditional and contemporary (to 1998) popular music, mixing field recordings from Timor with studio recordings made in Indonesia and Australia. Traditional music selections include a buffalo-horn call (track 1); a solo jew's harp performance (track 13); a solo bamboo flute performance (track 14); and a recording of the drum and gong music that accompanies the *makikit* (eagle) dance (track 15). Contemporary pieces range from choral arrangements of East Timorese vocal music (track 3) to Fretilin themes (track 16) to upbeat pop pieces with synthesized horns (track 10) and clear country music influences (tracks 17-18). Recording quality is reasonably good, and many of the tracks make for interesting listening.<sup>23</sup>

The CD includes 129 pages of notes, commentary, and images, printed in Portuguese, English, and Tetun. Information about the musicians and recording

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<sup>22</sup> Palmira Pires, Fernando Pires, and Nelo Pires also contributed liner notes and lyrics.

<sup>23</sup> Many thanks to Tradisom for allowing me to include these recordings in the Music of Timor exhibit on the day of the event.

locations is provided for all tracks, but the descriptive notes vary: some tracks have lyrics only, some have lyrics and brief commentary, and others are accompanied by comparatively lengthy and interesting essays about the significance of a composer or the occasion on which a piece was recorded.

Byrne also helped to produce two fundraising CDs in the course of her work for Timorese independence. *All in the Family* (Mushroom Records, 1994) and *Love from a Short Distance* (Shock Records, 1996) were both popular music samplers, and they included pieces from Timorese artists such as Mariano Abrantes, Agio Pereira, and Fernando Pires, alongside selections from international stars like Midnight Oil, Crowded House, and Billy Bragg.

Byrne was awarded the President's Medal of Timor-Leste in 2012 for her work leading up to independence, and since 1999 she has been active in the movement for West Papuan independence.

### 2.2.2 Sri Hastanto

Sri Hastanto is an Indonesian ethnomusicologist, composer, and professor at Institut Seni Indonesia (Indonesian Arts Institute) in the Javanese city of Surakarta. In the 2000s he held several high-ranking positions in the Indonesian government's cultural program. In the late 1990s, Hastanto published four tracks from Timor as part of his 4-CD survey *Musik tradisi Nusantara / Traditional music of the archipelago* (Hastanto 1997-99). These include one recording of a *leuk bi boko* ensemble from Central Timor; one recording of *lakadou* (listed as *lokadou*) from Timor-Leste; one recording of a children's *tebedai* from Ainaro in Timor-Leste; and one recording of *sasando Rote* from Central Kupang. Recording quality is good, and each piece is

accompanied by brief English and Indonesian liner notes, including essential details about instrumentation, playing techniques, performance contexts, and aesthetic considerations.

### 2.2.3 Philip Yampolsky

Philip Yampolsky is an American ethnomusicologist who has been researching and recording music in Indonesia since the 1970s.<sup>24</sup> In the 1990s, Yampolsky made a vast 20-CD survey of Indonesian music for Smithsonian Folkways, and two of these CDs, *Music of Indonesia Vol. 16, Music from the Southeast: Sumbawa, Sumba, Timor* (Yampolsky 1998) and *Music of Indonesia Vol. 20, Indonesian Guitars* (Yampolsky 1999), include recordings made in 1997 in Indonesian Timor.

There are nine recordings from Indonesian Timor on Volume 16 of the Smithsonian series. These include one track of a gong ensemble called *meko* (track 9) and two of *bidu* string bands (tracks 13 and 15), all recorded in Meto (Atoni) communities in Timor Tengah Utara (TTU); three Bunaq *tei* songs (tracks 10, 11, and 12), recorded in the Lamaknen region of Belu; and two Tetun *tebe lilin* songs (tracks 8 and 9) and one Tetun *bidu* band (track 14), recorded in what was then Belu (now Malaka). Volume 20 of the series includes an additional Meto *bidu* (track 9) from TTU. The recordings are excellent, and these volumes—like the rest of the series—include extensive notes on the recording locations, personnel, instrumentation, and musical

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<sup>24</sup> Philip Yampolsky wrote several short comments about his work in Timor for the Music of Timor exhibit mentioned above. Much of the material here is drawn from those comments.

characteristics of each piece, presented alongside short essays that comment on Timorese music more generally.<sup>25</sup>

In 2006, Yampolsky returned to TTU to record several vocal genres in the Biboki region, near Kefamenanu. Twenty of these recordings were published on CD by VDE Gallo as *Indonesia: Songs of Biboki (western Timor) / Indonésie: Les chants de Biboki (Timor occidental)* (Yampolsky, 2011a). Yampolsky wrote about this CD in a comment prepared for the Traditional Music of Timor exhibit:

This CD is structured rather differently from the Smithsonian albums. It was again a survey, but of a small region rather than an enormous country, and it was intended to delineate the wide variety of singing styles found within that region. The album includes songs in the style of church hymns, secular dance songs, and singing for funerals, birth, harvest, and collective work; and musically it ranges from monophony to homophony to exuberant heterophony, from unison singing to triadic harmony to parallel fourths to a welter of overlapping parts. (Pettigrew and Yampolsky 2017)

The CD includes 18 pages of notes (in French and English) with several photographs. The recordings are superb.

Since 2011, Yampolsky's research has been focused on documenting and analyzing vocal music traditions in Timorese villages. In 2012 Yampolsky spent three months surveying music and arts in the area of Nino Konis Santana National Park in Lautém.<sup>26</sup> The results of this work are reported in "Intangible cultural heritage in Nino Konis Santana National Park, Distrito Lautém, Timor-Leste" (Yampolsky 2013). The 20-page report includes summary information about language (3) and social structure (4),

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<sup>25</sup> All of Yampolsky's recordings from the *Music of Indonesia* project (published and unpublished) are archived at Smithsonian Folkways and at the Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia in Jakarta.

<sup>26</sup> This work was supported by the Asian Cultural Council in New York and the Spanish NGO Cives Mundi.

and detailed information on traditional cultural practices (5-17), including folklore and oral literature; textiles; baskets and weaving; carving; festivals; and music and dance. Several pages are devoted to the occasions for music and dance, and several more focus on the musical, poetic, and performative characteristics of *vaihoho*, a distinct genre of singing practiced by Fataluku speakers in the region. The report ends with recommendations for “sustaining and promoting the cultural heritage of Distrito Lautém” through tourism, education, and community action (17-20).

In 2014, Yampolsky began work with the Timorese NGO Timor Aid to document traditional music and dance for the Heritage Inventory of Suai-Camenaça. This multi-disciplinary project sought to document the cultural heritage of four communities—Camenaça, Holbelis, Matai, and Suai Loro—that were significantly impacted by petroleum-related infrastructure developments taking place on the south coast. As mentioned in the Introduction, I joined Yampolsky for this trip. In August 2015, he, Tinuk Yampolsky (his wife), and I spent two months creating audio and video documentation of traditional music and dance in these and four other nearby communities: Debos, Fatumea, Maucatar, and Zumalai.

In a 9-page (unpublished) report submitted to Timor Aid, the team provided summaries of the musical characteristics and performance contexts for fourteen genres of music and dance, and they made observations on the vitality of the traditions they documented (Yampolsky, Yampolsky, and Pettigrew 2016). The project also generated more than a hundred hours of audio and video recordings. All of these materials are housed at Timor Aid in Dili, and copies were delivered to source communities in 2016.

Since 2016 Yampolsky has been conducting extensive fieldwork in both Indonesian Timor and Timor-Leste. From 2016-18 he spent 18 months in Indonesian Timor, documenting Tetun singing in Kabupaten Malaka,<sup>27</sup> and in 2018-19 he returned to Timor-Leste for a year to resume his 2012 research on Fataluku *vaihoho*. The results of this work have not yet been published.

Alongside his research into Timorese vocal music, Yampolsky has also been working on a project to repatriate recordings made in the 1950s and 1960s by the members of *l'equipe Timor*. In 2014 he obtained permission from CREM to repatriate these recordings to source communities and government repositories, and he has so far delivered the Bunaq recordings (2016) and the Fataluku recordings (2017-18).

#### 2.2.4 Christopher Basile

Christopher Basile is an ethnomusicologist, film-maker, and multi-disciplinary artist who has studied Indonesian music since the 1980s. Basile is well known for his published recordings of traditional music from Rote (1998b) and Lombok (1998c), and in September 1992 Basile also traveled to Soe in south central Timor to record and document traditional music in an Atoni community. While these latter recordings remain unpublished, substantial excerpts of the recordings were combined to form one episode of a 4-part series Basile produced called *Music of Outer Island Indonesia*, which aired in 1993 on the Australian national radio station ABC.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Many thanks to Philip for allowing me to include some of unpublished field recordings from this project in the Music of Timor exhibit on the day of the event.

<sup>28</sup> The three other episodes Basile produced are based on his field recordings and research in Lombok, Sumbawa, and Rote. Interested listeners can contact the author through his website: <http://www.users.on.net/~renike.basile/roti-lombok/>.

The episode, titled “Music of the Atoni people of South Central Timor” (Basile 1993), includes long excerpts from three pieces of music: a lively ensemble performance with vocals, hand claps, two flutes (*feku* and *bobi*), and two plucked/strummed lutes (*leku*); an intimate recording of “a song for the forest,” in which two flutes and a vocalist blend with the birdsong on a local mountaintop; and a *leku* performance with accompanying vocals, recorded by the fireside as dinner bubbles away softly in the background. The recordings are excellent, and the entire program is almost completely given over to playing the music. In all there is less than three minutes of voiceover in almost 30 minutes of tape.<sup>29</sup>

Basile has also authored encyclopedia articles on the music of West Timor for both the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* (1998a) and the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001). Both articles focus on Atoni musical traditions, including the *sene tufu* (gong and drum) ensemble and *koa*, “a style that younger Atoni compare with rap” (Basile 2001). Basile describes the *leku* ensemble (heard in the *Music of Outer Island Indonesia* recordings), and he lists the instruments found in the ensemble, including “the *simaku* transverse flute, the *kili* comb and tissue kazoo, and the *gitar* (guitar)” (ibid.). He also lists a few solo instruments, including the “*sene hauh* (trough xylophone), *sene kaka* (six-string bamboo idiochord), *knobe besi* (jew’s harp), *knobe oh* (wooden jew’s harp...), and *knobe kbetas* (musical bow)” (ibid.).

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<sup>29</sup> Many thanks to Christopher Basile for allowing me to include this episode in the Music of Timor exhibit on the day of the event.

### 2.2.5 Margaret Kartomi

Margaret Kartomi is an Australian ethnomusicologist and Professor of Music at Monash University. She studies the music of Indonesia and Southeast Asia, and she is a renowned expert on the music of Sumatra. She is the author of many articles, books, and other publications on a wide range of topics in ethnomusicology, and she has produced several recordings of music from Indonesia.

In 1990, Kartomi made several recordings in Indonesian Timor, twenty-three of which were compiled on a CD called *Music of Timor* (2000), published by Celestial Harmonies.<sup>30</sup> The CD includes audio recordings from each of the (then) four administrative districts of Indonesian Timor<sup>31</sup>: Kupang (tracks 1-6), Timor Tengah Utara (tracks 7-9), Belu (tracks 10-19), and Timor Tengah Selatan (tracks 20-23).

A 34-page booklet includes valuable ethnographic and musicological commentary by Kartomi, and each recording is accompanied by a paragraph that gives the genre, instrumentation, and performance context, and sometimes a brief musical analysis. The recordings were made “in a great variety of acoustic environments” (Kartomi 2000, 12), and they cover a wide range of genres and styles, including *sasando-gong* music (tracks 1-3, 6); several kinds of drum and drum/gong ensembles (*katala-bedu* [track 4]); *leku-sene* (track 9); *likurai* (track 10); *psu bano maekat* (track 14); *bsoot tabso* (track 15); *sene tufu* (tracks 20 and 23); various instrumental performances, many of which accompany sung verses (*sasando biola* [track 5]; *heo-*

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<sup>30</sup> Many thanks to Celestial Harmonies for allowing me to include these recordings in the Music of Timor exhibit on the day of the event.

<sup>31</sup> There are now (since 2012) five *kabupaten* in Indonesian Timor, Kabupaten Belu having subdivided to form Kabupaten Belu in the north and Kabupaten Malaka in the south. Kartomi’s tracks 10-19 are all from the Atambua area in what is now (and was then) Kab. Belu. She did not record in what is now Kab. Malaka.

*bijola* [track 7]; guitar ensemble [track 11]; *feko bobi* [tracks 18 and 22]; *feko sedih* [track 21]; *knobe* [track 19]; and several examples of choral singing [tracks 8, 12, 13, 16, and 17]).

## 2.3 Research from 2002–2017

### 2.3.1 Ros Dunlop

Ros Dunlop is an Australian clarinetist and music educator with a long history of research and documentation in Timor-Leste. She first traveled to East Timor in 2002 as a touring performer, and in 2003 she returned to begin what would become over a decade of work to learn about, record, and document traditional music.

Dunlop published the results of much of this work in *Lian Husi Klamar/Sounds of the Soul* (2012), a bilingual English and Tetun survey of the musical traditions of East Timor. The book is written for a general audience, and it combines Dunlop's research and documentation with rich imagery from the *Arte Moris* fine arts school in Dili. The text includes sections on "traditional music of dance;" "traditional music of Oekusi" (contributed by Richard Daschbach); "traditional music of daily life;" and "traditional song" (Dunlop 2012, vii). The many short descriptive essays in the book are accompanied by audio and video examples on an included CD and DVD. A majority of these document instrumental traditions, though many also feature song and dance. Much of the research and documentation in *Lian Husi Klamar* was used to form the basis of Dunlop's Ph.D. thesis, "The Indigenous Music of East Timor and Its Relationship to the Social and Cultural Mores and Lulik Worldview of Its Autochthonous People" (2015), completed at the University of Newcastle in Australia.

Drawing on several years of fieldwork, and including more than 80 audio and video recordings, Dunlop's thesis is a substantial contribution to the study of East Timorese traditional music.<sup>32</sup> The 278-page document seeks to address several questions about the relationships of music and dance to social and cultural practices in Timor-Leste. The thesis contributes at least four significant outcomes for music scholars: a taxonomic organology of traditional East Timorese musical instruments, complete with images, audio and video examples, and appendices that detail the properties of the instruments (91-133, 224-237); an examination of East Timorese song and dance traditions and their roles (135-162); a study of the uses and "functions" of song, dance, and instrumental music in East Timorese societies (164-186); and a proposed framework for understanding the relationships of East Timorese traditional music to *lulik* concepts and practices (187-217). The latter section extends Dunlop's research in directions that may be of considerable interest to scholars from many disciplines.

### 2.3.2 David Palazón

David Palazón is a film-maker, photographer, and multi-media artist from Barcelona. From 2009-2012, Palazón made several video recordings of music and dance for *Tatoli ba Kultura*, a research project conducted in collaboration with Tony Fry at Griffith University. *Tatoli ba Kultura* set out to document "products and skills, historic materials and artifacts, tangible and intangible culture" in Timor-Leste (Palazón 2017a). These efforts were part of a larger project to develop an "indigenous-focused curriculum

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<sup>32</sup> Audio and video recordings may be obtained from the author on request. Many thanks to Ros Dunlop for allowing me to include several of these recordings in the Music of Timor exhibit on the day of the event.

for an educational institution [in Timor-Leste] that would centre on conservation and innovation” (ibid.). While the website for *Tatoli ba Kultura* is no longer in operation, materials are still available on the project’s Youtube, Flickr, and Facebook pages.<sup>33</sup>

Twenty of the videos in the *Tatoli Ba Kultura* collection document musical performances (Palazón 2017b). Seven of these are instrumental, including suspended log xylophone (*kakalo’uta*) from Los Palos; jew’s harp (*kakeit*) and mouth bow (*rama*) from Atauro; palm trumpet (*kokotere*) from Baucau; bamboo flute (*k’fui*) and hunting flute (*hewa*) from Ilimanu; and leg xylophone (*ai loos*) and the guitar-like *raraun* from Suai Lori. Two videos feature instrumental ensembles, including a string ensemble from Kiocole in Oecusse, and a music video for a contemporary pop group from Venilale. The remaining ten videos show various genres of singing and dancing from around the island: *tebe lilin*, *tebe dahur bei ala*, and *tebe likurai* from Suai; *hatu builliku* from Ainaro; *tebe ho rai lako* and *tebe dai* and dancing for a ceremony called *Fai Akar* from Viqueque; *tebe dahur Makasae* and *tebe dahur Salala* from Baucau; and *tebe Dahur* from Aileiu. All of the videos include minimal notes with titles, recording locations, and dates.<sup>34</sup>

### 2.3.3 Yohanes don Bosko Bakok

Yohanes don Bosko Bakok is an Indonesian graduate student in music at ISI Yogyakarta. In 2014 he conducted research in Padiae, Oekusi, and he presented the results in a conference paper titled “Acculturated Music in Kore Metan Ceremony Among the East Timorese” (2015). In this paper, don Bosko Bakok argues that the

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<sup>33</sup> Links and information can be found at Palazón’s website: <https://davidpalazon.com/tatoli-ba-kultura/>.

<sup>34</sup> Many thanks to David Palazón for allowing me to include these videos in the Music of Timor exhibit on the day of the event.

melodies, harmonies, and instrumentation featured in the Timorese mourning ceremony *Kore Metan* contain clear traces of Portuguese and Indonesian influence. don Bosko Bakok compares a popular Indonesian *keroncong* song called “Pulau Bali” with a piece of the same name that is often performed for *Kore Metan* ceremonies by the Salton Group, an ensemble made up of East Timorese refugees living in Kupang. He assesses the melodies of these two pieces and compares the instrumentation of the Salton Group (guitar, violin, tambourine, ukulele, and mandolin) to that of typical *Keroncong* ensembles, and he concludes that “both *Kore Metan* and *keroncong* music get strong influence from Portuguese culture” (126). The conclusion is tentative and the evidence is somewhat lean, but it is an interesting topic. The paper includes musical transcriptions from recordings of both pieces.

#### 2.3.4 Dana Rappoport

Dana Rappoport is an ethnomusicologist and researcher with the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (CNRS) in Paris. She has worked extensively with the ritual music of the Toraja people from South Sulawesi, and since 2006 she has been studying duet traditions in eastern Flores that suggest significant connections to Timorese music. Her 2015 article “Musique et rituel dans l’Est insulindien” (French) contextualizes Timorese music in Eastern Indonesia, and a series of articles including her 2015 *Music as Evidence of Settlement*, asks whether unusually similar musical traditions from Lamaholot of Flores and Lautém of Timor-Leste may suggest patterns of intermigration between the two. In late 2019, Rappoport made an exploratory 1-month fieldwork trip to the Island of Atauro, off the north coast of Timor-Leste. She made several dozen

recordings and has deposited them in the CNRS archive awaiting further cataloguing and information from future fieldwork.<sup>35</sup>

### 2.3.5 Many Hands International

Many Hands International (MHI) is an NGO that “develops, implements, hosts, and collaborates on a range of projects that support culture and development” in and around Lautém in the eastern part of Timor-Leste (Many Hands International 2017c).

In 2012-2013, MHI conducted research to document traditional Fataluku cultural practices. The project included documentation of several musical practices, and the results are published in “Elements of endangered forms of Fataluku cultural expression” (Many Hands International, 2017a)<sup>36</sup>, a web resource with many pages of video recordings and text, hosted on the Many Hands International website.

Researchers documented seven musical instruments used by Fataluku people, including six wind instruments and one percussion instrument. Wind instruments include a bamboo flute (*oi-oi*); two types of bamboo trumpets (*keko* and *fara-fara*); an oboe-like reed instrument (*moto me'n-me'n*); a bamboo-and-string jew's harp (*pepur*); and a conch-shell trumpet (*puhu-puhu*). The lone percussion instrument in the collection is a suspended wooden xylophone (*kakal*). (Notably, all instruments are used primarily for solo performance, though researchers point out that *kakal* may also accompany important ceremonial occasions.) Video recordings are included for each instrument, with instructions on playing techniques given in local languages. These are

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<sup>35</sup> These recordings can be heard online at the CREM archives: [https://archives.crem-cnrs.fr/archives/collections/CNRSMH\\_I\\_2019\\_039/](https://archives.crem-cnrs.fr/archives/collections/CNRSMH_I_2019_039/)

<sup>36</sup> Results are also reported in “Safeguarding the critically endangered cultural heritage of the Fataluku people: an e-inventory of intangible cultural elements” (Dunphy et al. 2017).

accompanied by descriptions of the construction, performance contexts, origins, and common usage of the instruments.

MHI researchers also documented the Fataluku poetic tradition called *vaihoho* (Many Hands International 2017b). *Vaihoho* poetry is often sung in duets that feature unusually close intervals between the two voices (see Rappoport 2015 and Yampolsky 2015). Researchers video-recorded *vaihoho* on several occasions, including performances for ceremonies to welcome guests, weddings, harvests, funerals, and for group work. As above, these videos are posted online and accompanied by descriptions of *vaihoho* singing and the events and contexts in which it is commonly performed.

### 2.3.6 Palmer Keen

Palmer Keen calls himself an “American DIY ethnomusicologist,” and since 2014 he has been traveling around Indonesia to “find, document, expose and promote little-known traditional musics around the country” (Keen 2017). He maintains a website and Facebook page for a project he calls Aural Archipelago, where he frequently posts his own audio and video recordings of Indonesian music. At the time of publication, the website archive lists well over a hundred audio and video recordings, not to mention countless photographs and pages of commentary.

In 2016, Keen made a trip to Indonesian Timor to document traditional music with his friends Greg Ruben and Marianne Schwab, and later that year he posted eight pieces about Timorese music on Aural Archipelago. The posts include four videos (three produced with Ruben) and seventeen audio recordings from Timor. The audio recordings, videos, and commentary for these posts are excellent. The writing style is decidedly not academic, but each post is accompanied by extensive and accessible

ethnographic, musical, and historical information; excellent photographs; and often interesting sidebars with stories of Keen's travel adventures.

Two of Keen's Timor posts are about *bidu* string bands (one even features a video of a *bidu* string band Yampolsky recorded in 1997) (2016a, 2016b); one post is about music for solo *feku*, a wooden flute (2016c); two document singing associated with mourning (*bonet* and *ratapan*, the latter lamenting the Crucifixion of Jesus) (2016d, 2016e); one is about *knobe oh*, a bamboo jew's harp (2016f); and one is about a harvest celebration called *Bei Mau*, in which participants first wage a ritual—and violent—battle, fought with corn and rocks, and afterward dance together to reconcile the warring factions (2016g). A final post, "Girls and Gongs: Leku Sene in Timor," discusses the role of women in Meto gong and ensembles (2016h). All of the posts include audio recordings, photos, and text; only some (*bidu*, *Ratapan*, *Bonet*, and *Bei Mau*) include videos.

### 2.3.7 Summary

The vast majority of the music-related research and recording that has been done on Timor can be considered survey work of one kind or another. The research of Kunst, King-Boyes, Byrne, Hastanto, Basile, Kartomi, Palazón, and Keen; much of Yampolsky's earlier work; Dunlop's *Lian Husi Klamar*; and Many Hands International's *Fataluku Cultural Heritage* project are all primarily documentary, aimed at giving a general overview of the music and dance traditions of a geographic region or ethnolinguistic group. The music research component of the *Heritage Inventory* extends this material to include the music of Suai and the surrounding area.

Looking to the future, as a picture of Timorese traditional music begins to emerge from these surveys, it becomes possible to consider in-depth studies that build on this foundational research. Some of these are already underway: Dunlop's thesis begins work toward understanding music in broader social and cultural contexts in Timor-Leste, and Julia Byl has recently begun a project to explore relationships between Timorese identity and musical preferences in urban settings (Byl 2017). Yampolsky's current work is a detailed analysis of complex musical and poetic practices found in two quite different Timorese music cultures (rural Tetun and Fataluku). In addition to her exploratory recordings in Atauro, Dana Rappoport has begun work with Yampolsky to compare Fataluku and Lamaholot singing traditions, using these analyses to evaluate hypotheses of linguistic and migratory relationships between Timor and Flores (see Rappoport 2015).

As the body of research on the music of Timor begins to expand in new and interesting directions, it is my hope that efforts to document—and particularly to record—musical practices in Timor-Leste will nevertheless continue. Documentation is valuable and important work, and it is far from finished in Timor-Leste, where the music of many regions and ethnolinguistic groups remains virtually undocumented.

## 3 Research

### 3.1 Living in Suai



*Figure 3.1: Our team in Suai. Back (L to R): Maun Guntur, Tiu Sico, Philip, Elidio. Front: Me, Tinuk, Meliana, and Ario (two friends who helped with translation and transcription).*

Our small music research team (that’s Philip, Tinuk, and me, seen in Figure 3.1) spent 58 days in and around Suai. We lived just down the hill from the local market, in an office building owned by Timor Aid. To call it an office building is not quite right, but it wasn’t quite a home, either—it was a so-called “modern” building, with plaster walls and a metal roof and a concrete floor, not very much like the thatched-roof bamboo *uma* that are home for most villagers. There are many such modern buildings in and around central Suai, and while some are occupied, perhaps an equal number are empty,

broken, their roofs and windows missing and walls crumbling or gone, ragged holes smashed in their facades—all memories of the Indonesian occupation. Our place was nice, though, with a small kitchen, three cozy bedrooms, two storage areas (filled with our recording equipment), and a large, open exhibition space that we turned into a comfortable office. Timor Aid provided us with a truck, and we lived with our intrepid driver, Tiu Sico, and also with Maun Elidio, who cooked and kept watch over our things, bringing us fresh-baked bread and bananas in the morning and hacking the ends off of coconuts with his pitted machete in the afternoon.

One of the managers of Timor Aid, Senhora Rosalia Soares, bounced along with us on the 9-hour drive from the capital to come and help us get settled. Rosalia arranged meetings with district administrators in Suai Villa, and she brought us to meet local leaders in Matai, Holbelis, Suai Loro, and Camenaça, the four village communities that formed the focus of the Heritage Inventory. Most people we met were familiar with Timor Aid and their recent work in Suai, and many were eager to have us come and record the music of their village. We gave local leaders our number—cellular service was then fairly new and surprisingly reliable in Suai—and we went home to wait for people to call.

And, to our great relief, people did call.

We attended 25 events in Suai in our two months of fieldwork—one every second day or so—recording and documenting traditional music and dance in eight different communities (the four mentioned above plus Debos, Maucatar, Zumalai, and Fatumea, to which we traveled on our own). We gathered hours and hours of audio and video footage, we took hundreds of photos, and we conducted dozens of informal

interviews with community members about music and music practice. At the time, it was hard to know what we were hearing and seeing; because there is little scholarship published about the music, we didn't know just what to expect. We asked a lot of questions, though, and eventually we were able to identify many genres that we believe had not previously been documented.

## 3.2 Findings

### 3.2.1 Tetun and Bunak Music

For such a small country, Timor-Leste is home to an extraordinary ethnolinguistic diversity. The exact number of distinct languages is debated and ever-changing, but in 2015 linguists put the number at “about 18 native Austronesian languages on mainland Timor-Leste, as well as 5 languages classified as Papuan” (Williams-van Klinken and Williams 2015). There are a few more languages spoken on the island of Atauro to the north (*ibid.*), and of course there are common languages that are spoken across the whole country: Tetun Dili (also known as Tetun Prasa) and Portuguese are the official languages, and many people also speak Indonesian, Chinese, and English, especially near the capital (National Statistics Directorate 2013).

Suai is located in an administrative district called Covalima. Most people in Covalima speak Bunak or Tetun Terik as their first language (National Statistics Directorate 2013), and Timor Aid's Heritage Inventory sought to document music from these two language groups (Sarmiento 2015). We did our best to meet that goal, but we had far more success in Tetun Terik communities than in Bunak communities. We also documented a few genres that appear to be practiced equally by both Tetun Terik and

Bunak communities, and recent research from Dunlop (2012, 2015) and Yampolsky (forthcoming) suggests that these genres are found among many other ethnolinguistic groups across the country.

We heard music as a part of wakes and other ceremonies related to death and dying; music to accompany communal work, such as harvest or putting a new roof on a house; music and dance for weddings and welcoming ceremonies; and, surprisingly, traditional music performed by local high school groups in regional competitions.

### 3.2.2 Summary of Findings

Table 3.1 lists the locations and genres that we recorded. The first four communities listed were identified as part of the mandate of the Heritage Inventory. We visited the last four communities on our own initiative. Communities in red are majority Tetun; communities in black are majority Bunak.

Research Area	Events	Genres Recorded	Genre Names
Suai Loro	9	10	<i>tanis mate, metisere, uma lulik ritual, holalia, beluk, tebe lilin (songs), tebe lilin (dance), likurai, bidu tais mutin, lakumerin</i>
Camanasa	4	6	<i>tanis mate, metisere, koremetan, lakumerin, mauwe, lumak gol</i>
Holbelis	2	1	<i>tei (7 types)</i>
Matai	1	2	<i>beluk, tebe lilin (songs)</i>
Zumalai	1	2	<i>mauwe, holon dok</i>
Maucatar	1	1	<i>beluk</i>
Debos	5	1	<i>likurai (rehearsals &amp; performances)</i>
Fatumea	2	1	<i>lakumerin</i>

Table 3.1: Summary of Findings.

In late 2016 Philip and I co-authored a research brief for Timor Aid, and the following excerpt from that report briefly describes each of the genres we encountered and recorded.

#### Tetun communities

We observed three genres of singing associated with ceremonies of death and dying in Tetun communities:

- *Tanis mate*. Lamentation over the body of the deceased. Usually performed by women. Musically stylized but highly demonstrative and very sad.
- *Metisere*. Singing for one or two nights before burial or at a koremetan, the end-of-mourning ceremony held a year after a death. Singing is performed by a group of men and a group of women, usually singing in alternation. Only a few melodies are heard in the course of an entire night of singing. The verses sung to these melodies often treat of death and loss.
- *Lakumerin*. A genre similar to metisere in function, but sung primarily by people “from the mountains.”

We observed two additional genres in regular practice exclusively in predominantly Tetun communities:

- *Lilin*. Both a form of dance (tebe lilin) and a repertoire of songs sung during that dance. The songs can also be sung recreationally, without

dance. We recorded lilin songs on several occasions, sung without dance and without our prompting or asking for them.

- *Holalia*. We attended and recorded at an uma lulik ritual in Suai Loro called *Hasai Amania Bei*, at which a brief (five-minute) passage of a narrative called holalia, concerning ancestral journeys, was performed by two men.

We know of several genres that were not performed on community initiative while we were there. The current status of some of these genres is unclear.

Where possible, we arranged performances of these genres:

- *Tebe Lilin* dance. A round dance performed by men and women who sing while dancing, the men's group answering the women's group. It occurs primarily as part of large-scale rituals. Although we heard lilin songs sung recreationally, without our prompting, we found no events in our two months there when tebe lilin dances were performed on communal initiative. In the end we commissioned a performance.
- *Bidu*. A category of group dances accompanied by instruments (violin and guitar) and a solo male singer. The dancers (some eight or ten women) do not sing. There are several forms of bidu. We commissioned a performance of bidu to record it, and the performers chose to do bidu tais mutin.
- *Tebe bei mau*. Tebe bei mau is a major festival, lasting from three to seven days, held early in the calendar year (though not every year) in

conjunction with the corn harvest. It was performed in Camanasa in 2013 and 2015, and in 2014 and 2016 in the “mirror communities” of Indonesian Timor that are related to Tetun communities in Suai posto. (For the 2013 *Bei mau* festival, see the video produced for Timor Aid by Chamot Nahac.)

- *Tebe dadoli*, also called *tebe dahur* and, in Indonesian Tetun communities, *tebe boot*, is a recreational round dance in which the dancers themselves sing verses—often exchanging them in a joking, bantering fashion—instead of dancing to pre-recorded pop music as they do in *tebe karolina* (see below). Such dances have been reported for many other parts of Timor-Leste, including regions neighboring Suai (though not explicitly for Suai), and several times we were told that a dance of this type was going to take place at a roofing or house-renovation, but when we went there it turned out to be a *tebe karolina*. If *tebe dadoli* did exist in Suai, it now seems to be rare or obsolete. The two forms of round dance that we know of in Tetun communities are *tebe lilin* (ritual) and *tebe karolina* (recreational).

### Bunak communities

We had less success in finding events to attend and record in Bunak communities. We attended a *koremetan* in Sanfouk, a mixed Tetun and Bunak community, and another in a wholly Bunak community in Zumalai (outside our designated communities but still in Covalima district). We also commissioned a performance of Bunak round dances (*tei*).

We observed three genres of singing associated with ceremonies of death and dying:

- *Mauwe* and *lumak gol*. These are terms for melodies (or classes of melodies) sung in the first, memorializing night of a Bunak koremetan.
- *Holon dok*. This genre bears some similarity to *tanis mate*, but it is musically and performatively distinct from the Tetun form. *Holon dok* involves a choral response to the lamentation of a single mourner.

We observed one other genre in regular practice exclusively in Bunak communities:

- *Tei*. Bunak know round dances with singing, called *tei*. We were told of at least nine varieties, differing in the dance steps and the manner in which the dancers link hands or arms, and perhaps differing also in the songs (though we were unable to establish this). One of these, *tei horai laku*, is apparently similar to the *tebe dadoli* reported (albeit inconclusively) for Tetun communities. We were unable to find *tei* in community-initiated performance, so we had to commission a performance. Like the Tetun, what Bunak did on their own initiative was *tebe karolina* (see below).

## Supra-ethnic genres

The genres listed above are all explicitly associated with either Tetun-speaking or Bunak-speaking communities. However, there are three forms that appear to be practiced equally by Tetun and Bunak communities and seem not to have exclusive ethnic affiliations:

- *Beluk* or *aka beluk*. Work songs sung by male and female choruses in alternation, or by one group alone. We heard *beluk* sung to accompany threshing of rice and mung beans (*anin fore*), pounding of rice and corn, and preparing sheaves of grass for roofing, and we also heard these genres sung recreationally.
- *Tebe karolina*. Reportedly named for an Indonesian pop song, this is a recreational round dance performed by men and women. The dancers do not sing. The music is provided by pre-recorded pop music, typically recorded in Indonesia. *Tebe karolina* is very popular, and it is usually the closing event of rituals and ceremonies. We did not record *tebe karolina*, as it does not fall within the category of traditional music that we were sent to document.
- *Likurai*. The dance known variously as *likurai*, *teberai*, and *tebedai* is found throughout Timor, on both sides of the international border. It features one or more lines of women who play small drums held under their left arms as they dance. One or two male dancers may also be present, often brandishing swords or shields. There is no singing and no music other than the rhythms played on the drums. *Likurai* is

performed to welcome important guests to a community or an event, and it is also performed at rituals connected with traditional houses. It is also now a popular exhibition piece for cultural presentations to tourists and audiences from outside the purely local community. As such it has become a specialty of youth groups, who enter government-sponsored competitions to identify the most accomplished likurai troupes. Likurai is thus one of the very few traditional genres that young people participate in enthusiastically. We documented both the rehearsals and some of the performances of a youth group in Debos. For the commissioned recording in Suai Loro, where tebe lilin and bidu were performed at our request, the dancers also performed a likurai in (they said) the manner appropriate to a traditional house ritual. The contrast between this sober and rather constrained version and the energetic and youthful likurai of the youth group is instructive.

(Yampolsky, Yampolsky, and Pettigrew 2016)

### 3.3 Research Method

#### 3.3.1 Documenting Singing at Tetun Wakes



*Figure 3.2: Men at the weekly market, selling a rooster.*

It gets hot in Suai, and much of daily life happens early in the morning or late at night. The weekly market starts before dawn: the women, seated on blankets, smile and sell dried beans and woven baskets; the men squat in the shade, cradling prized roosters (see Figure 3.2). All are gone by noon, chased away by the midday sun. It's generally quiet until the evening, and when there is music, it often takes place at night.

This is especially the case for wakes and for the end-of-mourning ceremonies called *koremetan*, which usually start around 8pm and last until sunrise.

Twelve of the twenty-five events we attended were Tetun wakes or *koremetan*, and most of these, it turned out, followed a similar format. We would get a call, usually early in the evening, from someone in a nearby village informing us that there was an event taking place that night. We would talk to Tiu Sico and get directions from Elidio, and then we'd set to gathering a small mountain of microphones and recorders and stands. The music portion of a wake doesn't get started until around 10pm, so we'd set out in the truck fairly late, driving slowly in the dark, bumping along the broken roads until we reached our destination, a new place each night.



Figure 3.3: Recording a Tetun Wake.

Tetun wakes take place in family homes, and they are large events, drawing relatives and community members from all around (see Figure 3.3). Early in the day a few family members gather to help arrange tarps and palm-mats called *klenik* in front of a host's home, creating a temporary floor and ceiling outside the front door for attendees to sit during the ceremony. Most people begin to arrive in the early evening and seat themselves cross-legged around the perimeter, chatting quietly. Some offer cigarettes, others pound lime dust for *siri-pinang*, a betel-leaf mixture that many people like to chew throughout the night. Sometimes, after everyone is gathered, there is food: chunks of boiled pig in a clear broth, white rice, and maybe salt. Young people serve, and elders and guests eat first. There is nearly always a bottomless supply of sweet coffee, passed around in colourful plastic cups.

At some point a dozen or so designated family members arrive and enter the house, where the body of the deceased is already laid out on the floor, wrapped in beautiful hand-woven textiles called *tais*. These are mourners, and they hug each other close and weep, loud and long, choked tears and harrowing melodies shaking out over each others' shoulders. The weeping is called *Tanis Mate*—crying over the dead. We recorded *Tanis* a few times, but often we felt it was too sad, too special and intimate to risk ruining the moment with a microphone. Sometimes, if we were invited in during *Tanis*, we just stood with our heads down, listening, and thought about the people that we miss.

More often we would arrive just in time for the food. Guests always eat first, and as we waited for everyone else to finish we would scope out the area where elders were likely to gather to sing. Tetun wake singing is antiphonal, the verses sung in call and

response by a chorus of men and a chorus of women, 10-12 people in each, both seated in front of the host's home in a rough semicircle. A singer from one chorus—usually a man—begins a verse with a short solo, and the rest of their chorus joins in partway through to complete the line, singing along more or less in unison.

Song texts are drawn from a vast body of oral poetry consisting largely of independent couplets. One chorus begins a verse by singing the first line of a couplet. This sets up a kind of challenge for the second chorus, who try to respond together by singing the first line of another couplet that is somehow related to the one begun in the opening phrase. If the men begin a verse with an opening line about a rooster, for example, the women should respond with the first line of a different couplet, also about a rooster. The men then sing the second line of their couplet, and the women finish with the second line of theirs. Singing continues like this all night, the two choruses playfully weaving their couplets together, testing each other's knowledge of the repertoire. The text is set to long, mostly pentatonic melodies, and singers will often stay with a melody for an hour or more before moving on to another.

Singers exchange verses, mostly without a break, until the first light of sunrise. Others mill about outside: some gamble, drinking coffee and local palm wine called *tua tali*; some visit and laugh and spend time together in the dark. We agreed early on that, as long as it was clear that we were still welcome, we would spend the entire night recording audio, documenting as much of the singing practice and of the event as possible. Singers pride themselves on not having to repeat a single couplet in a night, and we wanted to document as many of the verses as we could.

### 3.3.2 Tetun Wakes: Recording Audio



Figure 3.4: Another Tetun Wake. (Note the two pairs of microphones in an ORTF arrangement).

Still, we often spent the first hour of singing getting set up (often with the help of our assistant Maun Guntur), moving microphone stands and twiddling dials, listening back and trying a few different approaches. Local leaders helped to explain our presence to the singers, most of whom were generally happy to tolerate us as we scuttled about, shifting our gear two inches this way, then two inches that way, then back again, over and over (refer to Figure 3.4).

Recording wake singers was more complicated than either of us had expected. Philip is committed to creating beautiful, clear audio recordings, in full stereo; he wants “every instrument and every line of the texture to be so clearly audible that it could be

transcribed” (Yampolsky 2011b, 170). To that end, he likes to use a two-microphone technique called *ORTF* to record groups of singers because it gives a good stereo image, allowing listeners to hear each individual voice without the recordist(s) having to place a dedicated microphone in front of every single person.

When recording wake singing, with two choruses in each singing group, we had to think a bit about what we wanted. Our ideal, we decided, would be to record each of the men’s and women’s choruses in stereo, using two microphones for each. That would give us a rich, wide sound for both the men and the women, and placing two separate pairs of mics would allow us to balance the volumes of the two groups to some extent. Our best and most reliable recorder could only capture two channels of audio at a time, though, so our ideal approach meant that we also had to use a mixer. The only mixer we had on hand took the signal from four microphones and mixed them together to record just two channels of audio.

In an ideal world—and in many musical settings, actually—this approach would work just fine, and indeed, recording a nice stereo image of each chorus at a wake is, in many ways, fairly straightforward. The challenge is that, when a given chorus of singers is *not* singing, when they are waiting for the other group to complete their verse, they are deciding on their next verse, chatting, and coughing, and clearing their throats, and pounding siri pinang, and joking, and laughing, and just generally doing all the kinds of unquiet things that groups of people do when they are not singing. Since we were mixing down from four channels to two, trying to record wide stereo images for each group, our approach meant that we captured beautiful recordings of the singers, but with equally beautiful recordings of chatter and coughing and laughing laid right overtop.

Our early recordings were marred by this problem of chatter, and Philip and I talked through possible solutions constantly. Every event we attended became an opportunity to test out our latest hypotheses, and we often spent much of the night adjusting our setup, trying different recorders, arranging and re-arranging microphones and cables, and whispering to each other as we traded headphones to compare approaches. We tried all sorts of things, and we made some passable recordings, but in the end we just weren't able to solve the problem in a satisfying way with the equipment we had on hand.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.3.3 Tetun Wakes: Recording Video

We never could get it perfect, but once we'd attained a reasonably satisfying sound (our bigger conceptual problem notwithstanding), I would usually leave Philip's side and go to work on capturing photos and video of the event. Getting good documentary video of wake singing also turns out to be somewhat difficult. The way that the two choruses sit, in two rough semicircles, facing each other, presented a challenge right away: where to point a camera? Anywhere I put it, I stood to exclude a good number of singers from the scene. And if I decided to move the camera around, following the action of the singers' calls and responses, I introduced other problems: inevitably I'd miss a soloist's unexpected entrance, and even if I did catch it, moving the camera around in these extreme low-light conditions—often just a single incandescent bulb lit the entire night—led to enormous focus problems. Luckily, Philip's wife, Tinuk, was also recording video at many of these events, mostly shooting the non-musical

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<sup>37</sup> Philip has since begun using an 8-track field recorder for some of his work, and it has helped him to record some beautiful, chatter-free, funeral recordings.

elements. She graciously let me use some of her extra gear, and eventually I landed at a solution that used two stationary cameras, one pointed at each group, which I would later edit to follow the singers' exchanges.

While we were aiming for something approaching *comprehensive* coverage of an evening's wake singing in our audio recordings, I pursued a different ideal for video, looking simply to capture *representative* coverage of a given event.<sup>38</sup> One reason was practical: video is demanding. Recording video uses a lot of battery power and it fills up storage media much more quickly than recording audio, and video requires constant monitoring, especially in low light. These practical limitations might have been overcome, but in truth they reinforced an aesthetic concern as well. Wake singing is not a performance genre, and there is nothing particularly flashy or visual about it. While the verses changed over the course of the night, the singers didn't, and watching the same singers sing for eight hours is just not very interesting. I reasoned that if we had enough video footage to establish which singers were there, and if we could provide a decent picture of how the singing worked over the course of a few verses, well, that would be enough.

There was an additional consideration that weighed on our minds, too, informing much of what we did (or didn't do). These were family events—wakes, of all things—and we were reluctant to turn a night from a mourning ritual into a recording session or a music video shoot. We were quite aware that it was a privilege to have been invited,

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<sup>38</sup> My choice of the terms *comprehensive* and *representative* here is deliberate, taken directly from Philip's essay "Making the Music of Indonesia Series" (Yampolsky 2011b). We talked about the distinction between these two approaches a lot. I use the two terms a bit differently here, referring to coverage of a single event, but I mean more or less the same thing: with video, I tried to make a few choice moments "stand for many" (ibid. 166).

and out of respect for the families involved we often tried to fade into the background as well as we could.

### 3.3.4 Tetun Wakes: Documenting the Event

While I was out shooting, Philip was usually taking notes on the number and arrangement of the singers, the placement of the mics, the location of the event, and the melodies he heard. When I had gathered enough video, I would rejoin him and we would sit together for a while to talk and listen. He would share his observations with me (as he shared most everything, gracefully and with great generosity), and together we would formulate ideas and come up with questions to try and answer.

And then he would get up and go talk to people. He would go to find out the names of all the singers, and he would learn who the deceased had been and when they had died. He would talk with family members and local leaders, and he would often bring people who showed a special interest over to the recorder to have a listen.

I don't speak Bahasa Indonesia, so Philip would translate for me, coming back occasionally to fill me in on what he had learned. And when he had completed a round with the older folks, I would usually get up and go try out my *Tetun Prasa* with the younger folks, to see what I could learn. We talked a lot about me—where I had come from, and how long it took to get to Timor, and what it had cost, and how cold it is in Canada, and did I have a spouse, and kids—and I helped many people practice their English.

The night would go on, more or less like this, the two of us subbing each other off at the recorder, talking to people, popping over to the truck for a quick nap, sitting together quietly, making small adjustments, hatching plans, listening. Eventually,

suddenly, or maybe gradually (it's hard to know the difference when you've been awake all night) the sun would come up, and the singers would stand and stretch their weary legs and announce that they were finished. Many times people would gather for a procession to the cemetery, where a Catholic service would be held. Philip and I would usually coil up the cables and pack up the mics and head home to sleep.

### 3.3.5 Tetun Wakes: The Problem of Intergenerational Transmission

One of our goals in this research was to assess the state of traditional music in and around Suai, and so of course we would often ask people about music, too. My conversations with young people generally confirmed what the elders were telling Philip, and also what we ourselves had observed: as with most genres of traditional music, young people do not know these songs, and they are not learning them. Exactly why this is the case is unclear. We talked over this question a lot, and we asked young people and elders about it in all sorts of different ways. Elders can remember learning to sing by sitting behind their parents at wakes, listening, and eventually participating. Young people still attend wakes (and all manner of other ceremonies, actually), but almost none of them sing. It is not clear, though, whether this is because they have not been invited to sing, or whether they are uninterested, or what exactly is going on.

And *what exactly is going on* is a big and important question. Oral traditions like these depend on continuous communication across generations. Basically, for an idea in an oral tradition to survive, those who know about it must pass their knowledge on to somebody else before they die. And then that person must pass their knowledge on to another person, and so on: the knowledge of these traditions lives inside the people

who know them.<sup>39</sup> In Suai, there appear to be fewer and fewer people who know about traditional music.

When we finished our fieldwork, we wrote a report to Timor Aid that detailed our findings. We described the genres that we encountered, and we wrote about this problem of intergenerational transmission, and of our concern for these traditions. There is a passage in that report, from Philip, that I think perfectly captures our sense of what is going on:

In the past, parents could, we imagine, assume that children would learn to perform *metisere* and *tebe lilin* and other genres, because singing those songs and dancing those dances were the normal things to do as members of the community. Parents would therefore not need to teach the songs and dances, just as they do not teach their own local language; children would be expected to learn on their own. But the enormous social changes of recent decades—including compulsory schooling, religious conversion, military occupation, independence, urbanization, the introduction of one lingua franca (Indonesian) and then its replacement by others (Tetun, Portuguese)—have disrupted the normal progression of village life and the expectations of elders raised in an earlier time. New systems of transmission may be necessary to pass on traditional culture, but these new systems have not been devised. (Yampolsky, Yampolsky, and Pettigrew 2016)

We left Suai in late September, with all this on our minds. We made a presentation to Timor Aid, and after a few short days in the capital we all headed home.

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<sup>39</sup> There is a lot of literature that supports this idea. For great discussion, see Finnegan (1992). For ideas about intergenerational transmission in language, see Fishman (2001). See also UNESCO's *Language Vitality and Endangerment* (2003) and *Basic Texts of the 2003 Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2014).

## 4 Conclusion

### 4.1 Assessing the State of Music Practice: Using Catherine Grant's *MVEF*

I thought a lot about our assessment after I returned. Searching for ways to understand what we had seen and heard, I happened on a book by Catherine Grant called *Music Endangerment: How Language Maintenance Can Help* (2014). In the book, Grant offers a tool called the “Music Vitality and Endangerment Framework” [MVEF] (106) which suggests twelve criteria for assessing the state of a given music practice, as reproduced in Table 4.1.

Factor 1. Intergenerational transmission
Factor 2. Change in the number of proficient musicians
Factor 3. Change in the number of people engaged with the genre
Factor 4. Change in the music and music practices
Factor 5. Change in performance contexts and functions
Factor 6. Response to mass media and the music industry
Factor 7. Infrastructure and resources for music practices
Factor 8. Knowledge and skills for music practices
Factor 9. Governmental policies affecting music practices
Factor 10. Community members' attitudes toward the genre
Factor 11. Relevant outsiders' attitudes toward the genre
Factor 12. Amount and quality of documentation

Table 4.1: Twelve Factors of the MVEF from © Catherine Grant *Music Endangerment: How Language Maintenance Can Help*. New York: Oxford University Press. Page 125. Reproduced with permission of the Licensor through PLSclear.

In late 2015 I began using the MVEF to assess the music traditions we had encountered in Suai.<sup>40</sup> Not all of the MVEF criteria are useful at this stage of our research; many (especially factors 2 through 5) require data that would allow us to measure change in music practice over time, usually 5-10 years (Grant 2014, 114), and while we could guess, we really don't have that kind of information right now. Drawing on our observations and interviews, though, along with the limited external data that does exist, we can use the MVEF to help create preliminary assessments of at least four factors relating to music practice in Suai: intergenerational transmission; change in performance contexts and functions; governmental policies affecting music practices; and the amount and quality of documentation that exists.

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<sup>40</sup> Much of the material in this section is drawn from a presentation I made at the 4<sup>th</sup> Symposium of the International Council for Traditional Music Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia in Penang, Malaysia in 2016 (see Pettigrew [2017]).

#### 4.1.1 MVEF Factor 1: Intergenerational Transmission

<b>Degree of endangerment</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Intergenerational transmission</b>
<i>safe</i>	5	The music genre is performed by all appropriate ages and is transmitted intergenerationally.
<i>unsafe</i>	4	The music genre is performed by all appropriate ages, but transmission to the youngest appropriate generation is weakening.
<i>definitively endangered</i>	3	The music genre is performed mostly by the middle generations and up.
<i>severely endangered</i>	2	The music genre is performed mostly by the older generations.
<i>critically endangered</i>	1	The music genre is performed only by the very elderly, and then only partially and infrequently.
<i>inactive</i>	0	There exists no performer of the music genre.

Table 4.2: Grade descriptions to assess Factor 1: Intergenerational transmission for non-emergent music genres from © Catherine Grant *Music Endangerment: How Language Maintenance Can Help*. New York: Oxford University Press. Page 112. Reproduced with permission of the Licensor through PLSclear.

Each factor in Grant’s MVEF includes a rubric to help assess a given practice against certain criteria (refer to Table 4.2). The first and most important factor in the MVEF assesses intergenerational transmission, and measuring the evidence that we gathered against Grant’s scale, most traditional music genres in Suai rate somewhere between “severely endangered” and “critically endangered” (112). Most traditional music is performed almost exclusively by people over fifty, and while music associated with death and dying is, unfortunately, practiced relatively frequently, other genres appear to be performed far less often. To say exactly why this is would require further research,

but Philip’s quote above offers a plausible surmise: the extraordinary changes that have taken place in Timor-Leste in the space of two generations have made a significant impact on intergenerational transmission, disrupting the systems of transmission that once existed.

#### 4.1.2 MVEF Factor 5: Change in Performance Contexts and Functions

<b>Degree of endangerment</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Change in performance context(s) and function(s) in the last 5 to 10 years</b>
<i>integral contexts and functions</i>	5	The music genre continues to be performed in one or more regular, well-established contexts and holds integral function(s) within the community.
<i>expanding contexts or functions</i>	4	The music genre has expanded to new context(s) and function(s), and is performed regularly or semi-regularly.
<i>static contexts or functions</i>	3	Context(s) and function(s) for the music genre have remained largely static, even in relation to changing environments. The genre is performed regularly or semi-regularly.
<i>formulaic contexts and functions</i>	2	The music genre is performed only in irregular formulaic contexts and functions.
<i>highly limited formulaic contexts and functions</i>	1	The music genre is performed only on exceptional occasions in formulaic contexts and functions.
<i>inactive</i>	0	The music genre is not performed in any context for any function.

Table 4.3 Grade descriptions to assess Factor 5: Change in performance context(s) and function(s) in the past five to ten years from © Catherine Grant *Music Endangerment: How Language Maintenance Can Help*. New York: Oxford University Press. Page 118. Reproduced with permission of the Licensor through PLSclear.

Factor 5 (Table 4.3) measures change in performance contexts and functions. Change is hard to measure with the limited data available, but recent census materials suggest that there is currently “a large and rapid movement of people away from the agriculture sector” in Suai and across the country (National Statistics Directorate 2013,

72). In the district of Covalima, where we worked, agricultural employment fell 22.5% from 2004-2010, while employment in sectors related to oil and gas development rose by 158% over the same time period (ibid., 80). For genres like *beluk* and *anin foré*, which are intimately tied to communal agricultural activities, this shift away from agricultural labour suggests that the contexts for the performance and transmission of this music are likely to become increasingly scarce. Measured by Grant's scale, currently the contexts and functions of these genres remain *static* in relation to their changing environment. Unless something changes, we can probably expect these musical genres to move down the scale toward *inactivity* as agricultural labour in the district diminishes.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4.1.3 MVEF Factor 9: Governmental Policies Affecting Music Practice

<b>Degree of support</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Official attitudes toward the music genre</b>
<i>differentiated support</i>	5	The music genre is supported through specific cultural policies developed and implemented in consultation with culture-bearers.
<i>blanket support</i>	4	The genre is supported through overarching policies supporting cultural expressions, without differentiation and without consultation with culture-bearers.
<i>passive assimilation</i>	3	No explicit policy exists for supporting (or hindering) diverse cultural expressions, such as the music genre.
<i>active assimilation</i>	2	Implicitly or explicitly, the government encourages the abandonment of 'small' or non-mainstream cultural expressions, for example by providing education only in the language and culture of the majority group

<sup>41</sup> See Rees (2016) for an example of this kind of correlation playing out in rural China.

<b>Degree of support</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Official attitudes toward the music genre</b>
<i>forced assimilation</i>	1	Government policy explicitly declares the majority group to represent the only recognized culture. ‘Small’ or non-mainstream cultural expressions are neither recognized nor supported.
<i>prohibition</i>	0	Performance of the music genre is prohibited. It may be tolerated in private social contexts.

Table 4.4: Grade descriptions to assess Factor 9: Official attitudes toward the music genre from © Catherine Grant *Music Endangerment: How Language Maintenance Can Help*. New York: Oxford University Press. Page 121. Reproduced with permission of the Licensor through PLSclear.

Factor 9 (Table 4.4) assesses governmental policies that affect music practices.

While the Timorese government does not appear to have any policy specifically designed to support or hinder the practice of many of the genres we encountered, a kind of government funding and support does appear to extend to at least one genre, *likurai*, in the form of school teams, state-sponsored competitions, and paid performance opportunities for dignitaries and important events (Yampolsky, Yampolsky, and Pettigrew 2016). While this may reflect a “blanket support” for *likurai* as a non-differentiated form of cultural expression, other genres are at present largely left in a state of what Grant refers to as “passive assimilation” (Grant 2014, 121).

In a 2015 article, Grant explains how a simple lack of explicit policies in support of music traditions may well act against their continued practice, and I can see how this may be the case in Suai (Grant 2015). The supply base and airport construction will require an estimated 1300 hectares of land, much of which runs through existing villages (Timor-Leste Institute 2015a; Sarmiento 2015). Traditional homes in these areas are being torn down and rebuilt as modern homes in new locations, and community members have received monetary compensation for the loss of land and livestock

(Timor-Leste Institute 2015a; Timor Gap E.P. 2015). This is truly to the good for many residents who prefer sturdier concrete walls and metal roofs, but each new modern house also represents at least one less opportunity to sing the songs that people sing when tying a new roof on a traditional house. These sorts of impacts are not represented in the government's compensation plans (Timor Gap E.P. 2015).

All that said, in June 2015 the government of Timor-Leste ratified three UNESCO cultural conventions: the *1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*; the *2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*; and the *2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (República Democrática de Timor-Leste 2015).

The Timorese government characterizes the ratification of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions as evidence of “the willingness of the country to protect and promote its own cultural diversity, as a key element of sovereignty, stability and national identity, and [to make] culture a transversal element to a sustainable development” (ibid.).

Perhaps this shows some willingness among officials to embrace more substantial, meaningful legislation to support specific cultural and presumably musical practices in Timor-Leste. It will be interesting to see how the conventions play out in coming years, both in Suai and across the country.

#### 4.1.4 MVEF Factor 12: Amount and Quality of Documentation

<b>Nature of documentation</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Documentation of the music genre</b>
<i>superlative</i>	5	Abundant high-quality documentation exists in a range of formats, including audiovisual.
<i>good</i>	4	Adequate high-quality documentation exists.
<i>fair</i>	3	Adequate documentation exists in varying quality.
<i>fragmentary</i>	2	Limited documentation exists in varying quality.
<i>inadequate</i>	1	Documentation is very limited or is of unusable quality.
<i>undocumented</i>	0	Documentation is non-existent.

Table 4.5: Grade descriptions to assess Factor 12: Documentation of the music genre from © Catherine Grant *Music Endangerment: How Language Maintenance Can Help*. New York: Oxford University Press. Page 125. Reproduced with permission of the Licensor through PLSclear.

Factor 12 (Table 4.5) measures the amount and quality of documentation for a given genre or practice. There was very little documentation of these genres before our work with the Heritage Inventory. In summer 2016 I returned to Suai to deliver copies of all the music and video we recorded to community members there,<sup>42</sup> and I deposited copies with Timor Aid for inclusion in local and national archives. This is a start, but clearly much more needs to be done.

In our report to Timor Aid, Philip proposed a program that involves training locals, and especially young people, to document cultural practices in their communities in an ongoing way (Yampolsky, Yampolsky, and Pettigrew 2016). It's a very interesting idea. Whether documentation is created by locals or by outsiders, though, it seems important that it be created soon, before the generation of elders who still remember these

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<sup>42</sup> Timor Aid held a workshop in Suai in 2016, and I was fortunate enough to be able to attend. To my surprise, I traveled to Suai in a small plane with the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, who opened the workshop with a talk about cultural heritage. We didn't get a chance to speak together directly, but he did shake my hand and thank me for my work.

musical traditions dies out. Creating good documentation won't necessarily impact the vitality of these traditions either way, but it may well represent an important intermediary step toward revitalization later on (see Grant 2014, 23–28).

#### 4.1.5 MVEF: Drawing Some Conclusions

Grant's MVEF is a helpful tool for sorting out and communicating our observations, and it provides a useful starting place from which to advance some tentative conclusions. Genres of music connected to activities of ritual and work in Suai are in a precarious state. The Tasi Mane petroleum developments are contributing to changing labour trends in the area, while new construction and incentivized relocation are changing the landscape and local infrastructure. These changes create potential challenges for continuing music practices bound to contexts of communal and especially agricultural labour. While government has settled on remuneration amounts for material goods and policy-makers have made recent steps toward safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, officials do not appear particularly concerned by the cultural, let alone musical, impacts of oil and gas infrastructure developments on the south coast.

A larger problem, perhaps, is the issue of intergenerational transmission. It is clear to us and to locals that young people are for the most part not learning the traditional music, and it seems that this has likely been the case for a long time now, almost certainly since well before the recent petroleum developments. The reasons for this are complicated, and any remedies (if indeed remediation is an appropriate idea) are probably equally complicated.

We hope that our preliminary work to document music in Suai will, at the very least, help to keep some genres from disappearing from memory entirely, but our efforts in that direction are clearly just a beginning. If genres like *Beluk* and *Tua Lekik* are to survive into the future in any meaningful way (an open question), researchers will need to look at how and why processes of intergenerational transmission are not working, and to think about what kinds of things can be done—from policy interventions to documentation efforts to who-knows-what-else—to try and get them working again.

## 4.2 Discussion

Music vitality can be a nebulous concept, and I appreciate the MVEF for delineating and qualifying important areas of inquiry in assessing the state of music practice. It's been a great help for thinking through our work with the Heritage Inventory, and I expect that it will continue to be useful for future research in Suai and beyond. It is important to mention, though, that there are some substantial and thorny questions about the kinds of work—ours included—that the tool enables. Scholars like Neil Coulter (2015) and David W. Samuels (2015) have openly asked whether paying attention to “music endangerment” in this fashion is important, useful, or even ethical. These are difficult questions, and I don't have any easy answers, but I want to acknowledge and briefly address their concerns below.

In a review of Grant's book, ethnomusicologist Neil Coulter questions whether ethnomusicologists should be concerned with *music vitality*, arguing that “individual music genres” should not be seen as “objects that need to be saved” (2015, 128). “What is at stake in music endangerment,” he says, “is not so much the loss of any particular

genre, but rather the diminishment of opportunities for community music grooving (to borrow from Charles Keil)... The crux of this discussion, for me, is not the life or death of a genre, but the opportunities available for community members to express themselves together musically” (ibid.). David W. Samuels, a linguistic anthropologist, expresses additional, more general concerns over the epistemological and ethical implications of preservation work: “the question of the relationships between revitalizing languages and revitalizing musics leads us to the question of whether it isn’t the case... that the thing we imagine we are preserving has already been irrevocably changed by history and colony?” (2015, 352). He adds (insightfully, I think) that “the allegories and stories of cultural revitalization are ethical narratives” (ibid.), and he points out that such narratives tend to privilege a hegemonic conception of “order over disorder” (Minks 2013, 173 in Samuels 2015, 352).

These sorts of criticisms are not new. They point to fundamental (and unresolved) issues of debate in ethnomusicology, and they complicate my relationship to this work. In his essay “A Sweet Lullaby for World Music,” Steven Feld (2000) describes two narrative paradigms that emerge repeatedly in literature on globalization and music practice. Anxious narratives, he says, express concern that “music globalization”—the widespread creation of increasingly mediated, hybridized, commercially viable blends of so-called traditional and modern musical influences—displaces and diminishes important indigenous musical traditions (146; 152-53). Celebratory narratives, by contrast, portray “fusion forms as rejections of bounded, fixed, or essentialized identities” (152); for so-called “celebratory” authors, the creation of these same musical hybrids demonstrates the capacity of local cultures to adapt to

the forces of globalization and to define and maintain ethnicity and diversity on their own terms (152-53).

It seems to me that sentiments like Coulter's characterization of "what is at stake" in music endangerment provide a basis for the "celebratory" narratives that Feld identifies (and which certainly continue today) in the ethnomusicological literature. If, as Coulter says, the value of music is in community members "express[ing] themselves together musically" (2015, 128), then perhaps it does follow: as long as community members continue to groove together contentedly, maybe it doesn't so much matter what the grooving sounds like.

In the tradition of scholars like Charles Keil (1987, 1994), Christopher Small (1998), and Thomas Turino (2008), I agree with Coulter that the opportunities for community engagement and participation that music making provides are significant reasons that people value music. I would make the case, though, that the genres our team studied in Suai are valuable for other reasons as well. Anthropologists like Ruth Finnegan (1992) and Julie Cruikshank (1994) have argued convincingly that oral traditions encode and transmit important historical, social, and practical knowledge across generations<sup>43</sup>, and Norris and Harney (2014), for example, have written about how songs in particular can act as vessels for retaining and conveying complex and important extra-musical knowledge across distance and time.

Most of the music our research team encountered in Suai is vocal music, and the verses, we are told, draw from a large body of memorized oral poetry. We don't know the content of many of these poems, but singers say that they tell of local stories,

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<sup>43</sup> See also McLellan (1970), Darnton (1985), and Cruikshank (2001), among many others.

genealogies, myths, and important historical events. If that's the case, then these genres are more than simple melodies. In some sense they are like sung history books, etiquette guides, expertly curated anthologies of local knowledge. Music-making in these contexts is something more than just grooving—it's story-telling, affirmation, acculturation, and teaching. These are ritually important genres, and as central elements of the ceremonies that attend death, and marriage, and harvest, singing these songs is an important way to enact, affirm, and transmit the knowledge and shared beliefs and attitudes of the communities to which they belong. These genres are valuable as more than just opportunities for communities to sing together, and I suspect that they are not so easily replaced as Coulter's criticisms might suggest.

I find Samuels' concerns more difficult to dismiss. Setting aside the question of the history of these genres, "preservation" really is a problematic concept in this context, conjuring up troubling ideas of "nature" and primitivism that have acted as justifications for countless oppressive acts throughout colonial history. The kinds of preservation efforts that might stem from the preliminary work presented here may well privilege the known over the unknown and the (supposedly) orderly over the (supposedly) disorderly—it is not hard to imagine, for example, that work like ours could contribute to the creation of policies and projects that would promote the practice of known/documented genres over the practice of as-yet-unknown genres and the creation of new ones. These are indeed ethical narratives, and it seems to me that they are also very likely political: we know from the critical literature on UNESCO, for instance, that

preservation efforts can operationalize political narratives that serve to reinforce unequal power relations between preservers and the preserved.<sup>44</sup>

In the end, how can I make sense of the ethical implications of doing this kind of work? I don't have a good answer at all. On the one hand, I am anxious, like the old (and, one imagines, hopelessly un-hip) narrators from Feld's essay. I don't know what will happen if these genres disappear, and I don't really want to find out. On the other hand, I am also anxious that any efforts I make toward keeping these genres alive may in some sense be premised on colonialist, racist, outdated ideas that conspire to diminish the autonomy of people in Suai. I don't want these genres to disappear, but who am I to want or not want anything for people in Suai or anywhere else?

These days I'm not so much deciding between these two anxieties as I am juggling them, trading one for another at a given moment depending on what I'm doing. At the moment my hope for a resolution lies in rethinking what is the thing to be preserved. As is often the case, I find Yampolsky's thinking on this to be helpful. In an essay I mentioned earlier, "Can the Traditional Arts Survive, and Should They?," he writes:

I don't believe that anyone can preserve music or culture for anyone else, not in any meaningful sense. Preserve examples of it in a museum or in recordings, yes. But the only people who can sustain an art form or a cultural practice are the performers and their audiences. If they don't want it, it dies. If people are sick and tired of singing *kroncong* or dancing the minuet, then they stop and that's it. What

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<sup>44</sup> See Stefano et al. (2012), for example, especially chapters 1 and 6.

outsiders (or concerned insiders) can do is try to find out why people don't want it, and see whether those reasons can be addressed. (2001, 177)

I think about this passage a lot. I think he's right—in both an ethical and a practical sense—that the only people who can sustain a music are the music-makers themselves and their audience. Perhaps one thing that outsiders can do, though, is to support those “concerned insiders” who are actively working to keep their musical traditions alive. I remind myself that the goal of projects like the *Heritage Inventory* is not to preserve the traditional music of Suai-Camenaça against the “irrevocable changes” wrought by history and colony and petroleum infrastructure projects like *Tasi Mane*. The goal is rather to document the music and to preserve the documents. This keeps these genres and practices alive in the historical record at least, and it provides a means for locals and outsiders alike to engage with a profound body of shared knowledge and creativity enshrined in the music of a community.

In a sense, maybe Samuels and Yampolsky agree, though perhaps for different reasons: no one can really preserve intangibles like language or music for anyone else. I think perhaps one can work to preserve choices for others, though. Perhaps a person can work against the enormous economic, social, and political pressures that conspire to wrest choices from people—musical and otherwise—funneling them toward a limited range of viable options, and perhaps a person can work to create and support opportunities for people to make diverse and meaningful economic, social, political, and artistic choices in their own lives. Reading Grant's MVEF, it is not difficult to see that many (if not all) of the criteria that she outlines are impacted by socio-economic

pressures. By investigating the potential impacts of projects like *Tasi Mane*, we can surface some of these socio-economic pressures. And by repositioning the object of preservation, by moving from a concept of preserving a given music tradition to one of preserving the *viability* of making a given music through documentation and supportive research, maybe the ethical implications of the work change. In a basic way it at least seems more appropriate for an outsider to work on what might in some sense be considered outside influences.

I am still at the early stages of my thinking on these difficult ethical questions, and I know that there is a large and growing body of literature to engage on these issues (e.g., the *Decolonizing Methodologies* of Linda Tuhiwai Smith [2012]). Despite the attendant ethical challenges, I am glad to have the work of scholars like Grant and Yampolsky to help guide my inquiry. I admit that I am anxious about the nature and meanings of this work, but, considering the stakes, maybe anxious is not such a bad thing to be.

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