

MICRONESIAN MUSIC
Reflections of Change

by Alexander Simpson

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Narration script and research
for a 3-part video series
on the history of music
in Micronesia.

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This script was produced with a grant from
Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency (CAHA)
and the National Endowment for the Arts
with additional funding from
Outrigger Productions.

Thanks to Juanita Simpson and Angela Leuice
for research for this project.

Published by Outrigger Productions
P.O. Box 2719
Agana, Guam 96910

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Program #1

PRE-WESTERN CONTACT

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INTRODUCTION

"Where are we?
 Windward of *Wotho*.
 Fill the water breakers.
 The canoe is now exposed to the open sea.
 We are way beyond,
 way into the rough windward sea,
 we are afraid.
 What sign did you see?
 We saw the '*kalo*' bird.
 Where did he land?
 We saw white places
 to the windward of *Emejwa* and *Matirik*.
 We anchored and drifted out.
 We see the sign of the '*kone*' trees.
 Stand up, look, see where we are.
Tokeen and *Anelen* and *Malien*.
Likiép causes death.
Aekne and *Lolem* and *Lotot*.
 To leeward from *Boked* and *Mole*.
EMOLEEE! ..." ¹

Just as small Marshallese canoes sought their way over vast expanses of ocean, the navigators singing and sensing their way to tiny dots of solid ground, so each island group shares in this rich and common heritage. From the earliest evidences that the islands of Micronesia had become inhabited, also come the strains of music from antiquity.

These "true pioneers and explorers"² who journeyed "in large canoes"³ across vast expanses of ocean, also brought with them "their women and children to populate"⁴ their new home islands. They had with them everything they needed to survive, such as seeds, domestic animals, and food.⁵ Their traditions and cultures came along with them also, indelibly imprinted on their memories in the form of songs, chants and dances. Chants to help them navigate, songs to comfort them, dances of war, ballads of legend, and shamanistic invocations to plead for safe passage with the demons of the islands and the sea.

HISTORY

No one knows exactly when or from where the islands of Micronesia were populated. It was held, until recently, that the first waves of migration came "from the Asian mainland through the Philippines and then spreading eastward settling in the Marianas, the Carolines and the Marshalls".⁶

But "a recent find in the Marshall [Islands] pre-dates" ("2000 B.C."⁷) carbon dates of materials from "around 1500 B.C."⁸ found in the Marianas, suggesting strongly that the Marshall Islands were settled by peoples of the "Gilberts (Kiribati)"⁹ and "earlier .. from the south"¹⁰. The migration then moved from the Marshalls to Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, the outer islands of Chuuk, the outer islands of Yap, the southern islands of Palau, and finally the Marianas. There may also have been separate migrations from Manus Island and the south to Chuuk and its outer islands. This is how most of the islands of Micronesia were systematically discovered and populated.¹¹

Separate migrations are likely to have taken place to the main Palau Islands and Yap originating either from the southern Philippines, the islands of Kepulauan Asia, Kepulauan Ayu, or from Palau Waigeo in Melanesia (Indonesia) to the south "as early as 2500 B.C."¹² This is thought to be the case since Palau and Yap have a unique language structure, quite distinct from the Carolinians. This is born out by a study of Carolinian culture which stated that "racially, ethnographically and linguistically, the islanders [of Tobi and Sonsorol] do not in the least resemble those of neighboring Palau ... [instead they] very much resemble those of the atolls of the western Carolines especially in the area of Ulithi and Fais ..."¹³

Later migrations undoubtedly came from Polynesia through Nauru to Nukuoro and Kapingamarangi Atolls, also influencing Pohnpei. This is evidenced by these islands' Polynesian-type languages and cultural structures.

The Marianas also had a later influx from Asia and the Philippines, as well as South America, Mexico, and Spain due to contact with the first western sea vessels and their crews. It was during these migrations that the modern day Chamorro culture developed due to a dwindling Carolinian population and assimilation of Spanish and Philippino language and cultural styles. But that issue will be dealt with later.

In any case -- wherever they came from, it is without doubt that the peoples of Micronesia came to the islands in sea going canoes, bringing with them amazingly detailed knowledge of navigation, cultivation, and animal

husbandry, as well as intricate social and cultural structures -- and this knowledge was passed down by the use of mnemonic devices by combining song, dance and rhythm.

PRE-WESTERN CONTACT

Let's look now at a number of island groups and at the music that was present in the pre-Western contact days of Micronesia.

PRE-CONTACT - MARSHALLS

It is quite evident, from a number of sources, that the early Marshallese were master sailors. These navigators could "sense every wave on a canoe's hull and fix his position by feeling the ocean's swells rebounding from unseen islands."¹⁴ There are said to have been seven sets of swells emanating from a land mass that could be felt in the midst of the ocean. These swell types each had a different name and could be used to guide a canoe to any island. They also used chants that allowed the navigator to remember these types of swells, ocean courses, and the demon gods who controlled them.¹⁵ Their legendary use of "navigational stick charts"¹⁶ represented "one of the most complex sailing methods ever devised by man".¹⁷

There were also songs and legends such as their "Creation Myth" where it tells of "*Lowa* who came down to the ... island of Ailinglaplap ... and made the magical sound '*Mmmmmmmmm*', and all of the islands were created".¹⁸ This same legend says "there were no sails yet [on the canoes of that time], but in those days there was a special part on each canoe called the 'fish'. This part of the canoe pushed it to *Wotho*, but there was a ghost on *Wotho* that speared the 'fish' and killed it so that from then on they had to paddle the canoe[s] to make them move."¹⁹

There were many other songs of myth, "fairy tales",²⁰ chants of courage for war,²¹ and even lullabys to put the children to sleep.²²

"Sleep, baby, sleep, baby, *eeeeee-e*.
 Mama is gone.
 Papa is gone.
 Both have gone fishing to catch your food;
 Convict fish,
 pencil urchins,
 small eels, eely-eels, eels, eels."²³

None of the fish in this lullaby were ever eaten by the Marshallese, by the way. These lullabies were sung "over and over in baby talk to the child as he [was] rocked or patted lightly in rhythm to the singing".²⁴

From lullabies to information about "history (and) genealogy (in) traditional mnemonic songs",²⁵ music played an important role in the lives and culture of the Marshall Islanders.

PRE-CONTACT - KOSRAE

As the migration continued toward the east from the Marshalls,²⁶ the next island to be found was Kosrae, formerly Kusaie. Dance and song had become very interwoven into the whole cultural structure. By 1400 A.D., the time of the "construction of the *Lelu* ruins",²⁷ at the coronation celebration of a new king, there was an elaborate use of music, chanting, and dance. After food and '*seka*' juice were passed around ('*seka*' juice was "made by pounding the roots of piper methysticum roots on a flat basalt stone and mixing the juice with water"²⁸ for a narcotic effect) "then the great cookhouse dancers assembled following the blowing of the '*ukuk*' (trumpet shell)".²⁹ The dances began to the beat of drums called '*asig*',³⁰ reportedly brought from the Marshalls. The drum's shark heads were hit by hand and accompanied the '*usok*', a long (monotone) chant, which was a prelude to the actual dancing."³¹ Other dances and chants likely to be performed at this celebration were the '*mulmul*', a more melodious song "with hand clapping and graceful body movements",³² and the '*ra*' dance, a more "active"³³ dance performed "in a line, each man working as if in unison. The dancers wore '*moek*', shell bracelets, and were also bedecked with fern and flower wreaths."³⁴ Also performed were the '*alul*', another dance where the "women sat in a circle singing while men put an arm on the neck of the next man and moved together, stamping their feet then swinging an arm in rhythm."³⁵ They had other dances for other occasions. The '*salsal*' "danced only by the chiefs, in twos or threes to a drum beat" was often the closing dance at feasts.³⁶ There was also the '*unin sak*', a stick dance with men in rows that "looked like fencing" each using one stick.³⁷ While they performed this dance they chanted:

*"Nawoun kure nawoun kora mata koro maja.
Kofa agak, suri lona oena safola uramaje.
Sorani supko muanin, mama kuo tokumi,
Matu mato, roro nuuaki nuuaiko,
mojo matao poo, mataluk, mato mato ..."*³⁸

Many songs or chants were "often sung with a counter rhythm of clapping ... done to a two note scale."³⁹ Some songs they would sing might be the '*bas*', a "canoe builders song",⁴⁰ the '*amela*', "sung before roofing" a house,⁴¹ and the '*supsup*', when "ripe sugarcane was piled high on a raft and brought to the king."⁴²

The only other musical instrument to be found in pre-Western contact Kosrae, was a "whirling aerophone" that was twirled around to make a buzzing noise.⁴³ This was more of a play toy than an instrument and later spread to other islands in Micronesia.

PRE-CONTACT - POHNPEI

Music and dance were such a large part of Pohnpeian culture, and so much research has been done on it, that it could easily take a whole program to investigate. Many lyrics have been recorded. Some of the earlier songs are no longer fully understood. Over time, what used to be familiar people and places in songs tend to get lost and the songs begin to take on an aura of myth and mystery, losing their original meaning. From the steamy, rain forest jungles of this mountainous paradise, come songs of "counting the stars" to tell when the seasons were,⁴⁴ and recountings of myth and legend, such as the "story about *Luk-of-Heaven* ... who was reportedly a master speaker who knew all the stories of olden times."⁴⁵ He [supposedly] died, traveled the world, then came back to life again to relate his stories to the Pohnpeian people. He then composed a song about "his spiritual travels around the earth."⁴⁶ Here is part of that long song:

"I just want to die.
 And go to *Mejenian*,
 The place of magic power,
 So I might come back,
 And sit as a live person.
 My voice of the Underworld
 Had a cracked sound;
 A trembling accent.
 I will come back later
 And go to *Namanair* (Southern Harbour)
 Harbour of *Mejenian*,
 Go to *Nami Tipan* (Tipan Harbour)
 And I settled down,
 And I did not return from
Piken Jero (The Beach of the Light)

At *Pikenlenpon* (The Beach of the Pond of Night)
 In *Japen Jaunipon* (The Land of the Moon)
 Its light is different ..."⁴⁷

There are also recorded songs of sea voyages such as the "song of a canoe",⁴⁸ songs about the ancient city of *Nanmatol*, built in the 13th century⁴⁹ and songs of history and origins as in the lyrics to the following song:⁵⁰

"A canoe set forth
 at the *Jakaren Uai* (Foreign Landing)
 beyond yesterday.
 It was *Japkini* who sailed on it,
 came hither downwind.
 He has called together
 the people of his canoe ..."⁵¹

Again we find the influence of the Marshallese language, especially in the language of Pingelap, an island east of Pohnpei, and further evidence of migration from that direction.⁵² This could perhaps explain why some words in ancient chants or '*ngeis*'⁵³ are hard to understand. Archeologists would be well advised to make use of these rich oral traditions and language in their quest to determine origins. Although most information was passed down in "living memory", it was passed for centuries quite accurately due to amazingly effective mnemonic devices used in the islands through a mixture of dance, song and rhythm.⁵⁴

Before we leave the island of Pohnpei, it must also be mentioned that the '*ipe*' drum, almost identical to the '*asig*' drum found in Kosrae, was present. The only difference is that the '*ipe*' drum "could only be owned by the *Nahnmwarki* or *Nahnken* (the high chiefs of Pohnpei). These men and a few others were the only ones permitted to play it".⁵⁵ The same kind of drum was also found on Nukuroro, "where it is called '*aisi*' or '*asi*'".⁵⁶ Similar drums were found in Mokil, Pingelap, and Ngatik.⁵⁷

Pohnpeians used a "mouth flute made from the '*ro*' (Phragmites) or '*parri*' (bamboo)."⁵⁸ This flute was about a foot in length "closed at one end by a stopper of leaves and pierced with six holes up to the mouth piece."⁵⁹ They also had a nose flute '*kas an en tauma*'.⁶⁰ Similar types of nose flutes were also found in Chuuk.

PRE-CONTACT - KAPINGAMARANGI

The small island atoll of Kapingamarangi is little known but is mentioned here because of the slightly different influences in music and dance. The migrations from Polynesia, as opposed to the Gilberts, produced a more Polynesian approach to music within the culture. Music seemed to be used in a more playful way in work and games. In work, "for instance, in the [team effort of the] hauling of a breadfruit log ... chants were used that have sustained, heavy rhythm, with the emphasis on key syllables. Some chants varied (or) were improvised on the spot."⁶¹ This technique for moving heavy objects was also found in many other island cultures. Music was improvised in paddling home after fishing, with chants such as:

"Your paddle eats, bites the water below!"⁶²

At the start of breadfruit season, "the event was celebrated with song and dance."⁶³ At festivals, such as the '*ti rauhara*', "the people sang and laughed and engaged in horseplay while the work of cutting and stripping of the pandanus leaves, the fishing, and the preparations of food went on."⁶⁴ Songs were also extensively used for games. Old chants were "learned by the younger people, even children, though the meaning of the words may [have been] obscured".⁶⁵ '*Huihu*' was a game fondly remembered where many "half-forgotten songs are still associated ... to these tunes the circle of people rotate slowly ... this continued for 10 to 20 minutes and as the excitement increased and the tempo quickened, certain members started to call out:

"*Sakahanaleda, sakahanaleda*".

This was the signal for the second part of huihu called '*ti pinu*'. At this point the children [were asked to leave and the] sexes were broken up and the circle reformed ... women made up half the circle, the men the other half ... five men from the circle then went to the center ... a yellow pandanus key [was passed] from hand to hand ... the men passed the key while trying to keep it hidden from the men inside [the circle] .. once a man in the center was certain he had seen the key, he could choose to jump on the man in possession and wrestle him for it ... the attacker was assisted by his teammates from the center [while] the men on the outside tried to block them. If the men from the center won, a new team came to the center."⁶⁶

There were also songs for a variety of other games, such as swimming games.⁶⁷

PRE-CONTACT - CHUUK/CAROLINIANS

CHUUK

The Chuuk Islands (formerly Truk) are a large group of islands and atolls spreading over the center of Micronesia. As the initial expansion of peoples continued to spread out from 2000 B.C. to 1500 B.C., people began to populate these far-flung islands.

The Chuukese people love music and have always used it in their culture along with dance. Their famous stick dances, which may well have come over from Kosrae,⁶⁸ were perfected and used extensively in the islands of Chuuk. We also find evidences of other dances such as the "*fisifisikeer*" dance, which featured women and men dancing together.⁶⁹ Chuuk also had a variety of different styles of nose flutes. "The flutes were made from mangrove wood with the pith punched out [and they were] blown by the right nostril by men".⁷⁰

PULUWAT

Moving westward we stop in the Puluwat Atoll. Studies done in Puluwat have found evidence that the Puluwatese extensively used mnemonic devices in chants and songs for the purpose of passing down navigational and cultural information in living memory. We can see by the way they structured their methods of learning, that they had a highly advanced educational process. For instance, they often "arranged [names] in pairs ... the names in any one pair generally [resembling] each other much as the word Tweedledum resembles the word Tweedledee."⁷¹ Also, "the names [used were] more easily remembered because they [were] embedded in narrative (a powerful mnemonic device ...)."⁷² These devices were used, among others, in the following ways:

(1) At "every '*latmul*' ceremony (except initiation) [there was] the chanting of name songs, whereby the members of the clan [were] reminded of the importance of their ancestors and the system [was] continually memorized."⁷³

(2) "There was concrete cuing during recall ... which ... significantly [improved] performance ... in memory. [For instance] in every large ceremonial house there [was] a special stool ... this stool [was] not for sitting upon ... it [was] used solely as a table for debates. The speaker [had] three branches ... coconut leaves ... he [picked] these up at the beginning of his speech and ... [gave] a blow to the stool. He [would] then put down the

[branches] on the stool, one by one, as if they were a tally of his sentences. When [they] all [were] put down, he again [bunched] them together and [gave] another single blow. This series of actions [was] repeated throughout his speech, ending with a final blow."⁷⁴

(3) "There [were] also provisions for inducing arousal and attention ... which ... [improved] cognitive performance. Among the 'Iatmul' ... efforts [were] made to increase the memory endowment of individuals ... after birth, a male child [was] made to inhale smoke from a fire which [had a spell put on it] ... in order that the boy [would] grow up to be [especially gifted] in the totemic names of his clan; and later in life a man [would] be treated with spells which [were] believed to act on his heart (the seat of memory), [for the Puluwatese]' giving him the facility [to memorize] name-cycles and spells."⁷⁵

So it is clear that the Puluwatese used "specialized and powerful mnemonic techniques to store and retrieve cultural information."⁷⁶ This is "because knowledge resides in living memory [in] oral societies".⁷⁷ This is just one example to give as an idea of the types of devices used throughout Micronesia to retain knowledge.

SATAWAL

As we sail further west we find the island of Satawal. There has been a lot of research done on this island, due to the more accurate "living memories" of the people there with regard to navigational techniques. The Satawalese navigators (and indeed their brothers to the east) "used a system of star-paths that rise and fall over certain islands [to] serve as a celestial compass."⁷⁸ "Direction [was] determined by using these celestial elements in relation to wave and swell patterns, currents and trade winds."⁷⁹ "Distant travel [was] determined by a system the *Rematau* (Satawalese navigators) called 'etak'. With the aid of navigational stars, an experienced navigator [could] visualize unseen reference islands. Together with wind speed, currents and waves, he [could] estimate distance traveled with a high degree of accuracy."⁸⁰ "[This] detailed navigational information [had] been retained over the centuries by the use of chants. Vast amounts of knowledge ranging from the names of reference stars for faraway islands to seamarks found along the way [were] passed down from generation to generation through memorized chants. Their verse-like rhythmic qualities which [contained] the trade secrets of the *Rematau* [were] preserved with little distortion over the centuries."⁸¹ It is said that these chants were passed down from a master navigator by the name of *Poluelap*, who was purported to be one of the greatest navigators in Micronesia. He called his "domain '*Matauei Rob*' ... an ocean area that

stretched from the central Pacific to the Philippines [to] Papua New Guinea."⁸² It isn't hard to see that the Satawalese navigators had one of the 'most sophisticated system[s] of indigenous navigation' in the world.⁸³

The Satawalese developed "a remarkably involuted, circumlocutory, elliptical and metaphorical mode of speech and form of oral literature."⁸⁴ This means they had an amazingly effective system to pass down important information. They had "different classes, or 'bowls' of esoteric knowledge: for war, magic, meetings, navigation, and calling breadfruit."⁸⁵ The Satawalese called upon the demon spirit *Anumwerici* as they sang to Him.⁸⁶ The master navigators learned chants to take them from place to place everywhere in Micronesia. If they wanted to remember how to go to Puluwat they would do the "*Wofanu Satawal*" chant:

"I stay on Satawal,
I go *Mailap* up east on [Chuuk].
I stay in [Chuuk],
I go *Mailap* down west on Satawal.
I stay on Satawal, I go *Paiifung* up east on Puluwat.
I stay on Puluwat ..."⁸⁷

Apart from navigational songs, they also had lament songs,⁸⁸ sacred songs, play songs,⁸⁹ and chants of a student navigator saying goodbye to a master:

Student:

"I am leaving behind me the canoe of Palulap
For I will reach behind.
I will reach ahead;
I will reach ahead,
I will reach behind.
And, after my voyage,
will you still hold me?"

Master:

"I will still hold you,
because my flesh is your flesh;
your name is my name,
your earth is my earth."⁹⁰

The Satawalese also had names for all the main stars and planets in the Pacific sky⁹¹ and 'wofanu' or star navigational courses to and from most islands in Micronesia.⁹²

On Satawal song accompanied by dances were called 'pwaay'. "Songs without dances included lullabies (*yarhuwerhuwen faan yuneyun*), laments (*yarhuwerhuwen wenima*) shamanistic songs (*yomworoyanu*), and songs concerning heroic events (*wuur*)."⁹³ There were many 'pwaay' but few were composed on Satawal. They were "transmitted from other islands."⁹⁴ No songs [were] "sung solo. The islanders always [sang] in chorus. However, there [was] never a mixed chorus of men and women" [rather songs were] sung by groups of men or women.⁹⁵ "No musical instruments were used to accompany these songs, although the two instruments known in Satawal were the trumpet shell, used to call meetings, and a flute made out of coconut leaves. But these "[were] not for musical purposes."⁹⁶ 'Pwaay' were used for both sacred purposes and play purposes.

IFALUK

Moving westward to the atoll of Ifaluk, we also find music flourishing. There seemed to be a moral structure captured in the songs of Ifaluk. The songs were interpretations of the legends. The poetry was "tetrameter" (four main beats on pulsations).⁹⁷ "All dances on Ifaluk [were] accompanied by music, and all music [was] vocal..."⁹⁸ There were five main types of song dances. "The names [were]: 'arueru', lament; 'gapengpeng', invocation; 'bwarux', serenade; 'uru', religious dance (each district [had] a different version, and these [had] names of their own...); and 'laura', a stick dance."⁹⁹

There were also navigational songs. Here is "one of the incantations that [made] up part of the lore of navigation [as] sung by the navigator as he unfastens the mooring line ...:

I go, I go -
 Lay the anchor in the woods.
 Lay the anchor in the woods, O *Soupalele*.
 Sink my anchor in a great tree in the interior,
 Right in the middle, the very middle of this land.

When my canoe goes,
 Let me return to this land.
 One fathom, one fathom,
 Bow of the canoe, bow of the canoe,

I run it ashore.
 Stern of the canoe, stern of the canoe,
 I run it ashore."¹⁰⁰

Incantations to the demons of the deep were also thought to guide navigators. This "lore of navigation is known only to acknowledged captains and their students ... they are especially private. ...The following ... is to keep a canoe from leaking ..."

Oh coconut, powerful coconut,
 Be light!
 May the canoe be light,
 And float on top of the waves.
 Lighten the canoe, O *Loulemwau*.
 Make it light in the water,
 Light over the waves.
 Let it float lightly on top.
 Canoe, canoe, float, float, canoe,
 Like leaves of the foreign tree.
 Be light, float like foam.
 Ride on top of the sky."¹⁰¹

Perhaps a little bailing wouldn't hurt either! As if that weren't enough, navigators [were] always afraid of bad weather. There were incantations to "drive away a storm", to "clear the weather", to "drive off rain", and to keep the canoe from breaking apart.¹⁰²

"Another chanty gives saling diretions for going from Puluwat to Satawan and back. Making information into a song [had] obvious advantages as an aid to memorizing sailing lore...:

The star *Meleilal*
 Hangs over the pass at Puluwat
 And the beach *Pielgore*.
 The canoe goes through the pass to the beach.
 The outrigger lashing is repaired,
 Then she turns her prow toward the north
 And loads the platform with young coconuts.
 People gather to help.
 We steer for the star *Mwagoliker*,
 Pointing toward *Malrepul* at one end
 And *Pugulivairi* at the other,
 Of the crooked reef, the place to open coconuts,

Called *Truatali Velatrik*.
 We steer for the star *Alualu*,
 Then, when nearing Satawan, for *Serewalu*,
 And make the pass *Gepitau*.
Metaru and *Metumuri*,
 West-northwest, when the sun goes down,
 Hang over the pass *Faleor e bwaut*.¹⁰³

WOLEAI

Guided by a star, we travel on to the west and the Woleai Atoll. Music and dance were quite alive there also. A curious, taunting, playful chant was held at celebrations. The "men, ... bodies painted with yellow powder, come with their fine boiled and baked fish [to the feast]. They [struted] before the women while holding forth their fish and proclaiming in song their fine quality. [Then] the women [would grab] the smaller fish and sing back while they danced:

[Is] this the best you can catch?
 This is your best?
 [Is] this thing worthy of a good fisherman?"¹⁰⁴

There were also songs that were sung as rites for the dead, "over the grave, showing love and respect."¹⁰⁵ Again, we find the stick dance in Woleai. "Someone will start out singing and then others will sing along with him. All will begin hitting their sticks together in unison and the partners walk between the two lines to the [end]."¹⁰⁶

PRE-CONTACT - YAP

As mentioned before, it is very likely that the peoples of Palau and Yap migrated from a different direction, that of Melanesia. Yap had other influences later on, but the people of Yap are quite different in a number of ways from the peoples who populated the region. Their language is probably the most complex in all of Micronesia, followed closely by the Palauan language. "The Yap language stands out among the Micronesian languages as the only one where, with the exception of a few words, a remarkable difference can be observed with hardly any similarities, either in structure or vocabulary [to the Austronesian type languages of the rest of Micronesia]."¹⁰⁷ They have kinky hair and darker skin than many other islanders of the area; and they have unique and different customs. Yapese culture has also been slow to change. Today, anthropologists are most interested in Yap, as culture

has been preserved there more so than in most areas, except for the outer islands.

Despite these differences, music and dance [were] an integral part of Yapese culture also. It was observed that dances in Yap were more "lively" and "vigorous" than in Palau.¹⁰⁸ A dance in Yap was described as follows: "At a given signal, raging women shaking their weapons [approached] from two sides till the groups [were] within a few steps of each other; they [stood] motionless for a few seconds, then [formed] into one group to signify the end of the battle. While the two parties were advancing toward each other, so realistic was their threatening that anyone not initiated would have believed the battle to be real. With a piercing voice one of the elders [then] starts a not unmelodious song. The dancers do not move from the spot, but as they all swing their hips rhythmically in a weaving motion, the rustling of leaves of their skirts [marked] the beat of the song. A woman soloist [then began] the performance in her own words; only at the end the choir [repeated] the last words lustily. At the end of this unusual performance, the trembling hands of the dancers, which [had] been held aloft, [were] dropped, a terrible cry [rang] out, and the right hand [struck] the breast a ringing blow. Only [then did] the actual dance begin; the peculiar motion of the knees and ankles [resembled] a slow wave movement. ... [Looking] at the earnest faces, the lowered glances of the dancers, one [could have] hardly [called] this performance a dance. It [was] really a religious ceremony ... begging the demon spirits to whom they [prayed] not only for abundant food but for many offspring."¹⁰⁹

PRE-CONTACT - PALAU

Palauan music had an especially integrated role in its society. Relationships in the culture were divided into "inter-village, inter-club, inter-clan, inter-kinship, and inter-sex. In inter-village festivities, the obligation of a host village to dance [should] be fulfilled by ... perfection of execution. Inter-village hostility was expressed through [the] '*Kesekes re Belu*' [literally the tightening or knotting of the villages) [which would] seldom be revealed directly. Inter-club differentiation in the division of musical repertoire existed in '*Mulbekl*' (village festival) with their various taboos. Moral behavior in connection with inter-clan activities involved careful selection of heroic songs, to avoid offending people of other clans. Inter-kinship morality [was] expressed, for example, in the subject matter of the '*Tebang*' story, which [dealt] with [the] filial duty of a son to his father. Also important in family life [was] the taboo of songs involving sexual matters and body movements. Sex differentiation in [Palauan] music [was] of great importance ... mixed participation was ... limited. ... Love affairs [as] in '*Rebetii*' ... [were]

regarded as something valuable. ... Obscenity or vulgarity ... was disvalued because of its directness. This disvalue was, however, enjoyed the more by young men and women in the form of 'Alall'. 'Alall' was not only performed in outdoor dancing at the full moon, but also at funerals, strange as this may seem to us. In the midst of grave vigil, one of the attendants would suddenly start singing obscene 'Alall', as if to disgrace the dead. Then other attendants would try to stop him either by giving him money or by singing [the] solemn 'Kelloi'.¹¹⁰

The "musical personality of Palauans allowed access to locality, sex, age, or class. Locality differentiation was clear in the preferences [of different localities] ... for instance, people from *Babeldaub* (literally "upper sea") like the humor expressed in 'Alall' and 'Dalung', while people of *Eouldaub* (literally "lower sea") [didn't know the difference between the two songs]. Personality differentiated by sex or age was revealed in different tastes of appreciation of genres, which was culturally patterned. Class or ranking was always an important motivation [in] formation of musical personality. [This could be observed] in [the] stratification of people."¹¹¹ "Palau culture values skilled performance rather than creative innovation in its own members. It is in the area of skill that individual[s] ... can be reconciled without conflicting with the pressures for group conformity existing in the [Palauan] social structures."¹¹² The club structure in performance of a dance with song was organized into a three part ensemble: "'Meliikes' (leader), 'Mengesbch' (counterpart), and 'Rokui' (chorus). The following was a women's stick dance about 'Tebang'.

"Ngesar came and said to me,
 'I shaped the canoe,
 Which belongs to Tebang.
 But it got stuck in the taro patch,
 Standing in the ulecharo block.
 When I came back here, however, I found
 it absent from the ulecharo block.
 Instead, it was running in the sea in full sail.
 How new and how well done!
 Without a mast, they were pulling
 Its sail rope.'"¹¹³

There were also lullabies that parents sang to children as they rocked them in their arms.

"You kept crying, asking me
 To get *ilaot* prepared (coconut flower molasses drink)

After finishing it, I will go to the channel,
 Also to *Tab*, *Rengerikl*, and Point *Chiai*.
Ilaot caretakers are boiling fresh sap
 right from the hose.
 They are people from *Ngerechol*.
 There are nine streams of *ilaot* running.
 The streams reach to you at *Rachemerei*.
 They reach you, coming from the people.
 So she said."¹¹⁴

Palauans also sang songs of heroism in battle, especially to the King, *Ibeduul*.¹¹⁵ There were songs coming home from fishing in the evenings,¹¹⁶ an abundance of love songs,¹¹⁷ victory songs sung after head-hunting,¹¹⁸ and all kinds of songs women composed to remember special events.¹¹⁹ There were also a couple of musical instruments used, although not in conjunction with songs. The conk shell, or trumpet shell was often used at festive or religious occasions to call the people together.¹²⁰ There was also a flute used only by women in the '*Remengol*'.¹²¹ Later on, by 1947, the flutes had mysteriously disappeared.¹²²

All in all, Palau was a place of extraordinary music.

It must, however, be pointed out again, that no songs from any pre-western contact islands in Micronesia contained harmony at that point. As evidenced in Palau, there was antiphonal-type singing, such as when a leader sang a part and an individual or group answered. But these parts were in unison, and often tied to a scale of only a few notes, except for shouts and yells. The lyrical content of the songs, however, was sometimes very complex and full of deep meaning.

PRE-CONTACT - MARIANAS

We must treat the Marianas with care due to its historical complexity and absence of an abundance of data in pre-Western contact times. There seems to be a difference of opinion in almost every publication that comes out as to the origins of the original residents of Guam. (DNA tests will soon be underway to try to determine blood line links of the Chamorro people to the peoples of Asia and/or Micronesia). It looks like it is very possible that Guam was first discovered and populated by Carolinians, who originally came from Melanesia and Polynesia. In their legends they "describe the naming of the Marianas: Saipan comes from the Carolinian words '*Sei-pon*' meaning "empty space" because the island was found to be uninhabited. Rota is derived from

the word *'luta'* meaning "further up" because the island is just north of Guam when voyaging from the Carolines. Legends also say that when Guam was first spotted by Carolinian navigators through the V-shaped sprit on the canoe's bow, called an *'awm'*, the island appeared to touch it, thus the name *'Ku-awm'*.¹²³ Later on in post-contact times, when the dwindling population was dying of disease and famine, the island population was stimulated by an infusion of Asian, Philippino, South American, Mexican and Spanish influences. The Spanish cultural influence was very strong in Guam especially, and later the people of Guam named it "*'Guahan'*", a shortened form of the Chamorro words *'Gua ha hanon'*, meaning a place where there is water."¹²⁴

Music and dance from pre-contact Marianas is sketchy, but it seems clear that the ancestors of the Chamorro people "were illiterate and the only way [their] customs and traditions were carried was through songs and chants. Instead of just telling children information about their ancestors ... a tune was given to the stories making them easier to remember."¹²⁵ If, indeed, the Marianas were populated originally by peoples from the Caroline Islands, then their music, dance and navigational chants would have been similar to that of the Marianas Islands. This would seem to be borne out due to other similarities to Carolinian culture such as canoe building techniques, house construction, "*'urritaos'* (congregating in long houses for the purpose of fraternal sports and concubinage) ... bow and arrow [making and use]... wood carving ... the art of pottery making ... all of these arts were standard with the Melanesians ... [also] deep-pit cooking of the Chamorros was identical to the method used by the Polynesians ... [also the manufacture and use of] slings, adzes, and gouges were synonymous with those of other groups in the Pacific area ..."¹²⁶ There are some language similarities to other Carolinian island groups (although most of the language of the modern day Chamorro comes from a mixture of Spanish and Tagalog, we can find words in Chamorro that have remarkable similarities to words in other Carolinian languages, even Marshallese words), and other factors. Unfortunately, due to the original population having almost died out at one point, most of the music and dance from pre-contact times has been lost. Mainly the music and dance from the post-Western contact era is still intact and being performed and learned.

CONCLUSION

The music of pre-contact Micronesia is rich and bursting with meaning, just like the clear blue ocean waters of these islands are teeming with fish and every kind of sea life imaginable. Any study done on the chants, songs and dances of Micronesia will always come up short. But that doesn't mean you

can't immerse yourself in the magical waters of Micronesian music yourself. There are many good books out on the subject. You can still see many dances today that have been passed down from long ago. And you can still hear the strains of original island music if you will only seek it out.

MICRONESIAN MUSIC
Reflections of Change

Program #2

POST-WESTERN CONTACT

POST-WESTERN CONTACT

INTRODUCTION

Micronesia has a wonderfully diverse and colorful musical past. We have already seen what music was like in pre-Western contact Micronesia. We have seen that chants, songs and dances were used to pass down information and stories from generation to generation.

Let's examine now the influence that post-Western contact had on island music up until the widespread Japanese influence from 1914 to 1945. One of the significant factors that post-contact times had on music and dance in Micronesia, is that islands began to adopt dances and songs they liked from other island groups, as well as from Westerners. They also learned simple folk songs and dittys from sailors and began to write their own folk melodies with more melodious melodies and wider tonal scales than previously known. Perhaps the biggest change, during this period, came as a result of missionaries who introduced Micronesians to their first contact with harmony. Previously, all music in Micronesia, even though complex poetically and antiphonally, was monotonal in nature, covering a limited scale. During the post-contact era, Protestant missionaries, in particular, introduced hymn singing with four-part harmony and wide tonal scales. The amazing part of this story is how quickly and how well many of the islands learned the new singing technique and began to add their own uniqueness to it, in composition and in style.

POST-CONTACT - MARSHALLS

The first outside Western contact in the Marshall Islands came from Captain Alvaro de Saavedra in 1528. The Spanish laid claim to the islands in 1686. The Marshall Islands "were named for British Captain John Marshall of the HMS Scarborough, who charted the group in 1788."¹²⁷ There were later visits by Russian ships in 1817 and 1825. In 1861 the Germans first visited, and in 1878 a treaty was signed with the Germans, who made it a protectorate of Germany from 1885 to 1914.¹²⁸

In 1820 the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM) sent their first Protestant missionaries to Hawaii. In 1852, ABCFM and the newly organized Hawaii Mission Society sent their first missionaries from Hawaii through the Gilberts to Kosrae and Pohnpei. In 1857 they then sent teams to the Gilberts and the Marshall Islands.¹²⁹ These Protestant missionaries brought with them Western hymns, mainly from the

New England area, to teach the islanders. Hymn singing was quickly adopted, and choirs were organized. Since Kosrae, Pohnpei and the Marshall Islands have had four-part harmony in their islands for the longest time in Micronesia, they are understandably the most advanced today, in terms of organization, music sight-reading ability, number of national composers, and the size and number of choirs.

POST-CONTACT - KOSRAE

Although likely sighted as early as 1793 by a British ship, the first Western contact with Kosrae came from the ship "Coquille" captained by Louis Isidore Duperrey in 1824.¹³⁰ This was followed by another significant visit in 1827 by the Russian ship "Senyavin" under Captain Fyedor Fredric Lutke.¹³¹ Many whalers visited and interacted with Kosrae in the 1820's through the 1860's.¹³² On August 22, 1852 the ship "Caroline" brought the first ABCFM missionaries: one couple from New England, Rev. & Mrs. Benjamin Snow and a Hawaiian couple, Opunui and his wife, Doreka.¹³³

It was then that Kosrae began its conversion to Christianity. Along with this came the introduction of hymns in four-part harmony. It has been stated that it seems that "Kosraeans [were] born with ... beautiful voices and the ability to sing in harmony, needing only the Congregational missionaries who came from Boston in the 1850's to introduce their hymns to Kosrae."¹³⁴

POST-CONTACT - POHNPEI

In Pohnpei we also find the first explorer to make contact was the Spaniard, Alvaro de Saavedra in 1529.¹³⁵ In 1827, John Bull arrived and stayed on Pohnpei for awhile, dancing "an Irish jig to ingratiate himself with the local chiefs."¹³⁶ The Spanish claimed the Pohnpeian islands from the 16th century to 1885.¹³⁷ In 1828, the Russian ship "Senyavin" arrived with Fedor Lutke, who named Pohnpei the "Senyavin Islands".¹³⁸ On September 6, 1852 the Protestant ABCFM missionaries, from Boston and Hawaii arrived -- Sturges, Gulick, and Kaaikaula. They taught the Pohnpeians four-part harmony in hymns and Christian songs. By the "late 1850's" the "missionaries influence on the island was clearly growing ... More women were beginning to wear dresses ... and the men were now willing to accept cash payments for their work instead of tobacco ... religious hymns were starting to catch on, even among people who did not attend church services regularly, and missionary teachings were being passed by word of mouth to persons who lived miles away."¹³⁹

The ship "Caroline" continued on its way and stopped on the island of Mikil. The missionaries aboard were shocked to find a chapel already standing, built by a trader who was a reformed murderer, and who had already taught Christianity to the natives there. The missionaries found ongoing church meetings, that Sundays had been made a day of rest when no one worked, and that the people had destroyed their idols.¹⁴⁰

In a book entitled "The Caroline Islands" published in 1899, the author mistakenly makes the claim, after hearing some [Pohnpeian] boys sing him some hymns in harmony, that "part-singing [had] been a popular institution amongst Pacific island races from time immemorial."¹⁴¹ This is incorrect, since before the first contacts with the West, there is no evidence of the use of harmony in the islands, only antiphony using very limited scales. Also, this book was written far after hymns had been introduced by missionaries in the 1850's. The hymn singing became a major draw to the churches, as it remains today. Choirs were organized, and everyone wanted to have a chance to sing in the choirs, so they came to church. On a darker note, whaling had become a big worldwide trade already and by 1854 these whalers were already working the waters of Kosrae and Pohnpei, bringing with them diseases which caused a smallpox epidemic that wiped out half the population. Later another ship brought measles which also took its toll.¹⁴² The Germans took control of the island from 1885 to 1914. Their "rule was often harsh" and there were periods of bloodshed and disputes during that time.¹⁴³

POST-CONTACT - CHUUK/CAROLINES

Not much is written, historically, about post-Western contact in the Chuuk Islands before 1917 when the Japanese took over and eventually made it their "main ... naval base in the Central Pacific".¹⁴⁴ There were probably many contacts from sailors, ships and whalers in the 1800's, but little is written about this time. The first Protestant missionaries arrived in the Truk Lagoon in 1877 and in the Lower Mortlock Islands of Chuuk in 1879.

In Satawal, *Mwaramai* in the book "The Last Navigator", being the oldest man left on Satawal at the time, recollected the first contact from outsiders in Satawal. "He recalled that when "Sanny Ferto", the first white man anyone remembers, came to Satawal on a sailing vessel, they thought he was an evil ghost. But Sanny gave them rice and took copra in return. He married a woman of Satawal, and one of his great granddaughters is still alive. Next came "Lewis", a "big man with many hairs", who sailed among the islands in his schooner. *Mwaramai* thought he was not a person, "because he had hair coming from his eyes all the way past his nose to the middle of his chest!"

(The hair comment was likely an exaggeration but this was undoubtedly] Evan Lewis, a Welshman, a resident trader on Lamotrek from 1880 to 1900.¹⁴⁵ "Then came the Germans, who were interested only in copra. They divided Satawal with a road, taking half the island for themselves and leaving half for Satawalese. After them were the Japanese, who shot all the Germans ... Under the Japanese and Germans, there was much sickness. The ways of America [were] better. They [took] care of Satawal."¹⁴⁶

POST-CONTACT - YAP

"The first [Western] ship known to have come somewhat close to Yap was a Portuguese galley, commanded by Diego da Rocha" in 1525.¹⁴⁷ In "1527, the Spanish ship 'Florida', commanded by Alvaro de Saavedra, came to Yap, which he named 'Los Reyes'".¹⁴⁸ The Spanish had possession of Yap for awhile from 1869 to 1883. An "unusual character [during this period] was Captain David O'Keefe, an Irish-American who was shipwrecked on Yap in 1871. Nursed back to health by a Yapese medicine man, he caught a steamer to Hong Kong when he was able. He returned a year later with a Chinese junk, which he used to launch a successful 30-year trading career."¹⁴⁹ The Germans bought back Yap from the Spanish in 1883 and held it till 1914 when the Japanese came.¹⁵⁰

The music of Yap, during this period, progressed far more slowly than other islands, due to the fact that Protestant missionaries didn't show up there with hymns in tow till 1949. The only changes made were in the area of tonal scale, due to contact with Western folk songs. Thus, the Yapese held on more closely to their culture than some islands, due to the fact that they held on more tightly to their past musical styles

POST-CONTACT - PALAU

"Although Spanish and Portuguese navigators had visited as early as 1543, it was Captain Henry Wilson of the East India Trading Company's ship 'Antelope', wrecked in the Rock Islands in 1783" who was the first to contact Palau.¹⁵¹

There is an amusing story of one of the seamen from Captain Wilson's ship singing for Chief 'Abba Thulle' (*Ibeduul*). "Young William Cobbledick, a seaman known for the songs he had sung aboard the 'Antelope', was chosen to oblige ['Abba Thulle' with a song]. The visitors were very pleased with his rendition of "sea songs and songs of battle." In fact, 'Abba Thulle' was so impressed that he requested a song from Will Cobbledick on every future

occasion that their paths crossed. His favorite ... was "A Hunting We Will Go."¹⁵² These kinds of sailing songs of the West may very well have been the inspiration for folk songs and children's songs in Palau (and the rest of Micronesia) that used a wider scale for melody. Even though it has been recorded that Palauan women, of that time period, often made up "songs regarding [things they had seen] ... to ensure that they [would] not forget ... experiences ... and the sights that they had seen ..." ¹⁵³ it is likely that these songs were somewhat monotonal in nature, yet evolving with each new exposure to Western musical forms.

Unfortunately, during the English contact from 1783 to 1815 and the Spanish rule from 1815 to 1898 "the population [of Palau] declined from 40,000 to only 4,000 due to influenza and dysentery epidemics".¹⁵⁴ The Germans then took over and presided over Palau from 1898 to 1914 when the Japanese took over.¹⁵⁵ In the early 1900's, a famous Palauan composer by the name of Imesei, began writing melodic folk songs of all types.

In 1929, "Wilhelm and Margarete Lange [the first protestant missionaries to Palau] ... accompanied by a Trukese National [by the name of] August, arrived in the island[s] ... [and] settled in the village of *Ngiwal*".¹⁵⁶ Wilhelm and Anna Fey came and stayed through WWII. They endured persecution from the Japanese but helped the Palauan people survive by teaching them how to cultivate crops, bake bread, and other survival skills as well as establishing Emmaus Boys' School in Koror.

These missionaries also brought the first four-part harmony hymns from Germany, translated them and taught them to their congregations in Palau. These new skills from the West were, for the most part, seen as a blessing and "positive culture change",¹⁵⁷ as they brought "peace, healthier diet through the organized planting and harvesting of fruits and crops, new animal domestication, and of course, trade, bringing in new goods and services in great quantities from other larger Pacific Islands as well as from Europe, America, and the Orient."¹⁵⁸

POST-CONTACT - MARIANAS

In 1521 Ferdinand Magellan made contact with Guam. Spain then held the island, using "Guam as a source of food and water for Spanish galleons plying between Mexico and the Philippines" from 1521 till 1898.¹⁵⁹ The South Americans on Magellan's ships brought with them an instrument that is known by many names, which probably originated in Africa, made its way to South America, and from there all over the world. In South America it is

known by the name '*berimbau*', and is played with a stick and coin. The early Chamorros learned to make and play this same instrument which they called a '*belembautuyan*'. It has been described as "a stick zither, a long flat stick with a string that is almost equal to the length of the stick, with a resonating gourd. The string is attached to each end of the long board ... Moonshells are used at each end of the instrument to help give the string a clearer sound."¹⁶⁰

By 1783 the Chamorro population was down to 1,500 people from 80,000 in 1668 "with the help of introduced diseases like smallpox and syphilis."¹⁶¹ "From 1898 to 1941 Guam was run as a U.S. naval station under a captain ... [then] the Americans surrendered to a Japanese invasion force on Dec. 10, 1941."¹⁶²

The Chamorro music during the period of post-Western contact, began to take on the characteristics of the peoples who migrated and assimilated into the Chamorro culture. Since the Spanish cultural influence was very strong, Chamorro music began to take on Spanish characteristics, as well as their language and customs. Chamorro music became a mixture of Spanish, Mexican, Philippino, South American and Carolinian styles.

JAPANESE TIMES

Except for Guam, all the other islands of Micronesia came under the possession of the Japanese in 1914. Though the Japanese built up the islands with roads, buildings, airstrips, ship docks, military installations -- they also used the Micronesians as forced labor to do it, often employing harsh methods to achieve their ends. In many islands, residents of all different nationalities were persecuted.

Yet, even today, there remains a kind of respect for the Japanese. Many islanders learned the Japanese language, and benefited from the teaching they received in Japan's advanced art of carpentry and boat building. The languages of Chuuk and Palau, in particular, incorporated many Japanese words, especially for things introduced from the outside that they had no previous name for.

With Japanese imperialism came their music also. The sing-songy style, especially of Japanese females, stepping softly to a background of foreign Japanese instruments such as the *koto*, *gagaku*, *biwa*, *hoso*, *hajiki*, *shakuhachi*, and *yokobue* could be heard in many a house, and on the beach at night.

Micronesians learned Japanese songs and would perform them with their particular island flair, accompanied by ukulele or four-stringed guitar. In Palau, budding composers even began to write Palauan songs in the Japanese folk style.

Also, during this time and following into the American era, many composers were working on music and hymns for the Christian church. New composers were cropping up, especially in Pohnpei and Kosrae.

CONCLUSION

The music of Micronesia is an ever changing, infinite variety of sounds and lyrics against the backdrop of an ocean that is also ever restless, ever colorful, ever flowing. Many tools were provided in the post-Western contact era of Micronesia that have enabled its new composers to mold and shape the musical horizons of Pacific island music for the future.

MICRONESIAN MUSIC
Reflections of Change

Program #3

PRESENT AND FUTURE

PRESENT AND FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

On Ifaluk, a prophesy was made "long before the Americans fought their way to that part of the Pacific".¹⁶³ It was in the form of a song to the demon god *Tilitr*:

"The war will soon be over now,
The end of the fighting is near.
Do not be afraid any more!
Soon the Americans will come.
All you women and children who have
offered me flowers,
Fear no more!"¹⁶⁴

AMERICAN TIMES

Finally, the bloody war with Japan was over! Many islands were physically devastated by bombing and fire. But there was rejoicing. No longer would there be oppression, for America held out hope for freedom and, eventually, self-determination. This would not have been possible under Spain, Germany or Japan.

Later a woman by the name of *Letawariol* from Ifaluk, a "professing Christian" wrote a song praising the Americans coming to Micronesia. Here is a portion of that song called *Merikan*:

"Now all our women rejoice;
Now the Americans have come.
This is pleasing to the chiefs.
They have given us a paper.
This place is to rise;
This island will be lifted up.
The chiefs say we are to dance;
We will dance, we will rejoice
This very month, for this is a good year!

Ei! ..."¹⁶⁵

After the war in Palau, "school children under the instruction of ... capable teachers [were observed to be able to] harmonize beautifully with not so much as a pitch pipe to assist them. Eager to please the Americans, they [attempted] to master the "Star Spangled Banner" and "Swanee River" and put on a gala display for official school visitors. They [were] as proud of their vocal accomplishments as of their school records."¹⁶⁶

At that time in Palau, however, it was noted that "original compositions [were] welcome but they [were] rare ... there [were] Palauan love songs, lullabies, and songs of praise that could be incorporated into dance, but only the older people [knew] them. The young [were] the performers and they [preferred] something exotic even if it [was] meaningless [to them] -- a Japanese love song in Yapese, for example ... it was genuine entertainment to witness a Palauan imitation of a Japanese imitating an American interpreting "China Town" or "Mexicali Rose."¹⁶⁷

In Palau, when groups came together to move a heavy object, such as a boat or log, a chant was used to precede each effort. The chant in Palau said "*A ika mu*". This was mistakenly thought by many to be a Japanese chant, when it was really a mispronunciation of the American phrase:

"Oh, it can move"!

Also after the end of the war "Palauans [had] taken three dances from the Yapese, two for women and one for men. In one of these, two rows of women are seated back to back with legs drawn up to one side. All of the dancing [was] therefore done with hands, arms, and head. There [was] an ordered routine of hand claps, arm and thigh slaps, and arm rotations. The most distinctive feature [was] a delicately synchronized movement of the head and hands: the arms [were] raised chest high and bent at the elbows, and the hands [pivoted] on the wrists in time with a turning of the head from side to side. The delicate posturing and undulations of the upper body [recalled] the stylized movements of [a] Balinese legong. The songs for [the] performance [were] rapid and lilting. It [was] used to carry a refrain composed for the occasion to honor a chief.

The men's dance of Yapese origin [was] also a sitting dance which usually [paralleled] that of the women and sometimes [was] a parody of it.

The other Yapese women's dance [was] lively and brash. The performers [stood] in two lines, pivoting and revolving in place while their arms [waved] and their hips [wiggled], hula style. The motion of the hips [was] suggestive and [approached] the erotic, especially when at regular intervals the women

[bent] to a crouch as they loudly [clapped] their hands and their leader [sang] out impromptu sing-song phrases contrived to evoke laughter:

Come down, come down,
Very good, very good.
One, two, three, four.

in any one of three or four languages. The Palauans [enjoyed entertaining] the Americans with this dance, for usually before it [was] over the diversion became mutual. In fact, they regularly [used] it to get spectator participation. Everyone [was] encouraged to clap hands, and as the excitement [developed], young men [went] into the audience to urge the more exuberant, men and women, to join the dancing line. The dance [had] no end. It [ran] to a stop when exhaustion [overtook] the performers.

The only Palauan dance that ... survived [was] one performed by older women ... the women [stood] in two lines that [were] divided in half, the two halves facing each other. Each woman [held] two wands with streamers attached to one end. The dance [was] performed on one spot and [consisted] of lifting one heel at a time and then softly lowering it as the other foot [was] lifted and the body is pivoted through a right angle. The foot movements [were] synchronized with arm, shoulder, and head movements, and a rolling motion of the hips -- again the hula but much subdued. Each phrase of the dance [lasted] about ten minutes and [ended] with the women tapping their wands and straightening up. The song they [sang was] slow and mournful. It [was] solemn, and tells of some historical event being memorialized."¹⁶⁸

Also, after the war, it was not uncommon to find a bomb casing or piece of scrap metal, left over from the fighting, being used as a bell to call together village meetings; instead of the use of trumpet shells as in previous times. The bomb casings made especially good bells, when rung by striking them with a piece of pipe or a hammer.

With the Americans also came an deeper introduction to Western music styles. Especially popular were early Country & Western singers such as Jim Reeves, Tammy Wynette and Hank Williams. Popular with the younger set were Elvis Presley and early rock & roll artists. The younger composers, especially in Palau, began to write music with these elements and later traveled to the Philippines to record albums of their music.

PRESENT

In 1981, the First Chamorro Music Festival was held in Saipan. It was billed as "An Evolution of Music". The "latest in what's happening in Chamorro music" was presented there.¹⁶⁹

From Guam, there came "one of Guam's oldest 'backyard musicians'".¹⁷⁰ There are only a couple of people left who can make and play the native *belembautuyan*, one of whom is Tun Manet Quichocho, who performed it on this occasion and others since.¹⁷¹ There was also a group from Saipan called *Rematau* who performed songs such as "*Gi Talo Gi Halom Tasi*" (In The Midst of the Ocean) with two guitars and three ukuleles [using a] blend of Carolinian flavored Chamorro ...¹⁷² Other groups that performed were the modern music group, the Kasuals from Guam, Jesse Bais singing his originals "*Tata*" and "*Mangingi*", the Compadres, John Arceo and Mary Torres singing "*Hu Guaiya Hao*" and "*Kulot Di Rosa*", Gus Quichocho, J.D. Crutch and the Gaga Brothers, and also John Itriate singing American tunes with original Chamorro lyrics.¹⁷³

It was commented at the festival that many of the old Chamorro songs were being lost by the time the Japanese had been defeated, and presently "there are a few songs ... but most of the melodies are so old that people can't remember their titles, except for one or two favorites that are simple to remember and easy to play."¹⁷⁴

In the same year, there was the Saipan Arts Festival. It featured dances and song from many cultures in the Pacific and Asia. These types of festivals have become popular events in Guam and Saipan. This particular event featured arts and crafts, "record albums ... with music from the Mariana Islands", a Kosraean womens' dance with waving fans and graceful movements "to the methodical rhythms of the Orient", drama from a missionary group, and "various singing groups [performed] traditional and original songs in English, Chamorro, Carolinian and Filipino. Choirs sang. Bands beat drums. Members of the Filipino Association nimbly [pranced] through a changing maze of bamboo poles upon the floor of the stage and adroitly [flowed] into a waltz-like dance."¹⁷⁵

Also in 1981, David A. Nelson traveled to Ulithi for the Christmas festivities there. He relates: "Christmas day festivities began early with worship at the [Catholic] church, followed by a singing procession through the village praising the birth of Christ ... for the visitors, the Christmas highlight [were] the dances that began after the meal ... all seven and a half hours! Decked out

in traditional costumes and make-up, the men and women of *Mogmog* took turns telling the history and legends of Ulithi through dance and song ... this is how traditions are passed on from generation to generation."¹⁷⁶

In 1983 an article was written about the *Rematau* of the Carolines and the modern day voyages the few surviving navigators made to prove they still had the skills passed down to them, through chants and dances, from generations before. These voyages were made by many different navigators and canoes in the last 10 years. Mike Malone writes: "What effect have the voyages of Micronesia's *Rematau - Hipour, Repuanglug, Repuanglap, Ikuliman, Otoligh* and *Mau Pialug* -- had on the islands? When news of the voyages spread, a revival in canoe-building was sparked. Other islands near Satawal and Puluwat commenced building bigger canoes and navigational skills that have remained dormant for generations are again being put to the test. Because of the *Rematau*, pride and confidence in the islands' traditional sailing cultures has been reaffirmed and strengthened. And their accomplishments are a reminder of the rich heritage that all the peoples of the Pacific have inherited."¹⁷⁷

In 1989, the University of Guam held a celebration of the dances and songs called "An Evening in Micronesia" put on by their students. There was "a Trukese stick dance, a Yapese *refanu* dance, a marching dance from the Marshall Islands, and many other performances." There was also a "Palauan dance", a dance from Mokil, Pohnpei called the "*dalala*", a dance from "the Mortlock Islands of Truk", another Palauan dance "telling of the arrival of the turtles to lay their eggs", a dance from the islands of *Faichuk* in Truk, a dance from Kosrae to a song called "Green Hills ... [which describes] the people and culture of Kosrae, and how the island was created", and a "*fisifiskeet* dance [from] Truk".¹⁷⁸

Also in 1989, a visit to Kosrae at Christmas was recorded. Christmas time there is one big event. [On Christmas Eve] "the local radio station played Christmas music almost non-stop." Food and preparations were made, then "singing from outside [*Lelu Church*] heralded the arrival of the first group of performers, about thirty children dressed in white and waving large silver stars and white paper flowers on long sticks. Not for a moment did they take their eyes off their teacher as they sang and danced for the audience ... older children followed with a similar performance ... [then came] the first group of adults, their heads crowned with *mwarmwars*, [and] dressed all in white, except for the men's customary dark pants. Each man carried a star inside a circle ... holding them high above their heads, they 'painted' patterns in the air as they sang in harmony under the direction of a leader with a small brass bell ... the group created several such patterns, constantly forming and reforming

as they sang the hymns learned and practiced for this Christmas celebration. At the end of their performance, Santa Claus joined them to toss handfuls of candies to the excited children ... [another group of women then] entered ... they too sang hymns and presented a routine of complicated patterns while the men carried their encircling stars on a painted voyage through the air ... the last group numbered more than 200 adults who, like the youngest children, were dressed in white ...

[On Christmas day they all met in *Lelu Church* again and] the Kosraeans living on Pohnpei [sang] ... [then groups from all the churches of Kosrae sang] ... the celebration went on for over six hours. While the dancing was similar to the first day's performances, every group sang a different hymn, each presentation lasting about an hour."¹⁷⁹

Many other islands have large Protestant choir festivals. In Pohnpei, every year, they celebrate the *Rongamau*, a festival of music where all the choirs tour around to each church in Pohnpei and celebrate. This celebration last for a week. In Palau, every five years, there is a Jubilee to mark the introduction of the gospel there. The crowd gather in Koror Evangelical Church to hear choirs from each state, as well as choirs from other islands. This is also a week-long celebration including food, special guest speakers, and stories of early missionaries are retold. Each island group also has special occasions where choirs presentations are offered and skits are portrayed, especially at Christmas and Easter.

Lately, modern electronic keyboards have made a real impact on Chuukese music. Many choirs from Chuuk and Pohnpei are now accompanied by a keyboard player, mainly using keyboards capable of playing chords with one finger, along with drums and bass accompaniment. The Chuukese have become very adroit at using these keyboards, and usually play them accompanied by an added guitarist or two. Young Pohnpeian groups use keyboards in the same way, usually with more accompaniment in terms of guitars, bass guitars, and other instruments.

CONCLUSION

The history of music in Micronesia is tied with cords tightly to the cultures and roots of the peoples of the islands. This program has attempted to give you a small taste of the progression of music and its effect on culture. Without a doubt, music has played a significant role in every aspect of the lives of the people on these tiny dots in the Pacific Ocean. It has been shown that the use of music was simple yet profound, used in play but also used as a

device to weld traditions and knowledge in young minds, leaving indelible traces all the way back to the flood of Noah and the tower of Babel in approximately 2500 B.C.

However the dispersion to the islands of Micronesia played out, it is evident that the peoples who came brought with them vast amounts of practical knowledge in every area, binding this knowledge to "living memory" using combined forms of songs, chants, dances, poetry, pantomime, and other mnemonic devices. The research done on this Micronesian music project and the information you have just witnessed, flies in the face of those who believe that B.C. men and women were simply stupid cavemen. The music and poetry of ancient Micronesia displays a depth of understanding and emotion that make our modern day songs seem inane by comparison. Ask any writer today about when the best writing was done, and you will usually find the response harkening backwards in time to England, then Greece, and beyond. The same is often true of music. The early music of Micronesia is simple, yet profound ... its techniques for remembering legends, history and tradition are, only now, beginning to be understood as the highly effective teaching and memorization aid that they are.

FUTURE

As Micronesian music has changed over the centuries, while assimilating music styles from other countries, it nevertheless has retained its own musical identity. Music today is still used to teach, to inspire, and to aid in the holding on to indigenous cultural traditions that are slipping away over time. Some cultural changes today are for the better, others are for the worse. It will be for each island group of Micronesia to decide which direction they wish their culture to move in -- and the future music of the Pacific will surely reflect these movements, as it has so accurately done over the past 4000 years.

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