

THE RITUAL MUSIC OF THE IGLESIA DEL CIUDAD MISTICA DE DIOS: A PRELIMINARY REPORT

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The Iglesia del Ciudad Mistica de Dios is one of several religious colonies found at the foot of Mount Banahao in barrio Santa Lucia, Dolores, Quezon. Hundreds of pilgrims from distant *balangays* of the different religious sodalities around Luzon still flock to its many shrines (*puwesto*) during the season of Lent in the Philippines. The pilgrims believe in the mystical transfer of the Holy Land to this area and accordingly observe the rites and rituals propitious to the occasion.

The following report is a descriptive analysis of the ritual music of the Iglesia del Ciudad Mistica de Dios. The recordings contained in two cassette cartridges taped along the way to the shrines and in the Mistica de Dios compound included: (1) a part of a *pasyon* singing (Tagalog version of Christ's Passion) by Santoyo's group, (2) a hymn sung by a group of pilgrims from Batangas before the Piedra Mental, a large rock at the Sta. Lucia shrine, (3) another *pasyon* singing at the Prishtahan, and (4) an evening procession music and four early morning hymns of the Mistica de Dios. All together, these musical pieces constituted the raw data of this study.

The recording were totally improvised. There was no specific plan as to where or when the music would be recorded. What follows then is a random collection of musicological data. While it is true that not all the recorded music in tape were transcribed completely, this explor-

atory fieldwork nevertheless yielded substantial information regarding the nature of the ritual music of the Iglesia del Ciudad Mistica de Dios.

General Remarks

The ritual music of *Mistica de Dios* is purely vocal and is quite western in orientation. The hymns are set either in major or minor modes. These are also performed in harmonized texture, mostly in thirds and occasionally in fourths or in full triadic structures. There is a predilection towards the $\begin{matrix} 3 & 2 & 3 \\ 1 & 5 & 1 \end{matrix}$ harmonic progression whenever

applicable, which partly indicates a rather sophisticated harmonic sense. While there seems to be an awareness of the vertical sonority among the singers, the tendency is to be more conscious of individual lines, thus preserving the polyphonic aspects of the hymns. Although there is no definite choral organization, the singers seem to have absorbed the harmonic content of the hymns. They can sing any of the voices in the two-part and sometimes three-part textures.

The congregation, always singing as a group, is led by one or two presentors or leaders. The leaders appear to have three principal functions in the musical liturgy: (1) to sing the first part of the lines in responsorial settings, e.g., in the Litany of the Saint; (2) to sing the first motivic line in order to start a hymn or a phrase and (3) to maintain a certain continuity in the singing either by sustaining phrases, or by immediately starting the next major formal division, almost creating an overlap with the previous phrase or section. The *cantors* maintain a certain control of the tempo, the movement, and the formal structure of the performance. They almost function as conductors.

The use of the Latin text (in the Litany of the Saints) points to a Roman Catholic orientation in the liturgy. Some of the chant formulas have been adapted and transformed. The misplaced word accents give evidence to the probable adaptation of the text of pre-existing tunes. The style of singing is characterized by *portamentos* and occasional subtle turns, which tend to moderate the speed of the hymn in general.

*Analytical Description of the Music**Hymn 1 (early morning service)*

The opening hymn is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving and is sung at the beginning of the early morning service that starts at 5:00 a.m. The meter is in four-four time although just like in the other hymns, this is not strictly followed in the singing. This discrepancy is due to the sliding style of singing, the irregular pauses and the non-coincidence of verbal stresses to the musical accents.

The tempo in the first few bars of the recording (which is about the middle of the entire hymn) is rather slow. When the refrain is reached, however, the tempo becomes faster until towards the end of the first part of the refrain (l.13m.4). The slow pace is kept until the end.

The leader or *cantor* consistently sings the first word or motivic line of the strophes (l.6 ms. 4-5) while the refrain (l. 11 m.4) is sung by the entire congregation.

The harmonic texture in this particular hymn is articulated more than in the other hymns because all the so-called consonant intervals (3rds, 4ths, 5ths, 6ths) have been represented. Some full triadic structures, as in ll. 5-6 have also been noted.

Hymn 2

The full text of this hymn is rather unclear. However, some of the recognizable words indicate that the hymn is one of thanksgiving and is addressed to the Mystical Rose (Blessed Virgin Mary). The text also contains the liturgical Greek text of "Kyrie Eleison" and some Spanish-sounding words (l.15 and l.17).

The music is in the style of a kundiman, set in slow triple meter and in a minor key. The phrases are more clearly delineated and are a little bit more symmetrical than those found in the other hymns. The harmonic content is again characterized by independent linear parts, resulting in a variety of intervallic structures.

At the end of each verse, there is an ornamental 4-3 suspension figure sung by the leaders. However, this is treated more as a textual ornament rather than a dissonance as a consequence of a linear progression. This gives further evidence to the possibility that the hymn was initially learned as a fully harmonized composition.

Hymn 3

The musical character is similar to that of a chorale. It is very homophonic and the phrases are very assymetrical. The verses are hard to distinguish from one another because of the continuous style of singing. The breath pauses do not seem to fall on standard cadence points. The emphasis is not on linear polyphony but rather on sonority. The main harmonic interval is the third above the melody. The movement is almost recitative-like, slow and full of *portamentos*.

Hymn 4

The final hymn of the early morning service is almost the same as Hymn 3. It assumes the character of a chorale recitative. The phrase divisions are likewise asymmetrical and the harmonization is simple, using the third as the main interval. Unlike the previous hymn however, the main melody of this hymn is in the top voice. Another point of difference is that the phrases are longer than those of Hymn 3, resulting in a more lyrical setting.

The phrase *mamahay ka* are two of the words that are closely recorded. It is interesting to note that the same words appear in the closing hymn of the evening service. This fact implies that the same sentiment is felt at the end of a worship service — an appeal to God to dwell in their hearts. This also seems to indicate that the *Mistica de Dios* group has specific hymns for specific purposes in their ritual.

Litany of the Saints and Responsorial Hymn

One of the most striking features of the procession is the singing of the Litany of the Saints. This is significant because the series of responsories in this litany is broken up by interpolated verses taken from another hymn. The practice is very similar to medieval troping where a standard chant is broken into sections by interposing new bits of melody and text. The only difference is that in medieval troping whatever was interposed is related in meaning to the chant. In this case, the music and lyrics added do not necessarily complement the meaning of the original text. The litany proper is sung in Latin while the interpolated verses are sung in Tagalog. After the entire Litany, a concluding prayer is recited and the entire hymn (together with the interpolated verses) is sung.

The hymn is made up of ten verses, the last verse being a repetition of the first. Each verse is made up of six lines. The first line contains five to nine syllables, and the rest have eight syllables each. The refrain is made up of two lines that are repeated; the first line contains eight syllables while the other has ten. This is best illustrated by the sixth verse which came out as one of the few verses whose text was clearly recorded:

O kamatayang mararahas (9)
 Sa ulan at bawa't kidlat (8)
 Itong siphayo ay lunas (8)
 Higit na inililigtas (8)
 Na ang sino mang Kristiyano (8)
 Na may dibosyong totoo (8)

Refrain

Angeles saka ng koro (8)
 Pr'in (purihin) natin ang Bathalang totoo (10)

The first verse and the last have only four lines instead of the usual six.

Purihin ka naming totoo (9)
 Ng sanlangitan Ama ko (8)
 Pinupuri k'namin totoo (8)
 Sa sanlangitang mana ko (8)

Refrain

Angeles . . .

The formula for the tune of the responsorial hymn may have been derived from the Gregorian chant:

a. Gregorian chant

Omnes sancte innocentes O - ra - te pro nobis

b. Mistica de Dios melody

Omnes sancte innocentes O - ra - te pro nobis

c. Harmonized version of the Mistica de Dios melody

Omnes sancte innocentes O - ra - te pro nobis

The *Mistica de Dios* melody is merely a third above the original Gregorian chant (transposed to a) with a little embellishment in the cadence point. A further harmonic elaboration is then added as illustrated in c.

The performance variates some motivic lines of the hymn verses, such as those found at the beginnings of the refrains. Much of the melodic alterations result from the length of the text, i.e., when some lines contain less or more syllables than the standard count of eight. This is quite apparent at the beginning of each verse and the fifth line of the third verse (see 1.32 and 1.67). Slight harmonic variations also occur especially in the refrains.

There are a number of word contractions and the seemingly misplaced normal word accents in relation to the musical accents. This means that the music and the text had been composed independently of each other. In the refrain for example, the word *purihin* is sung as pr'in on an eight-note.

Hymn 2

This hymn is sung in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the end of the evening service. This is probably the principal hymn of praise of the congregation to the object of their veneration. Its place in the evening service — it is sung as a final hymn — lends credence to this assertion. The ministerial role given to the women in the community, the blue ankle-long skirts worn by the women, all point to the Blessed Virgin Mary as the focal point in their liturgical worship. Maria Bernarda Balitaan (MBB) was the founder of the samahan.

Hymn 2 is sung a little faster than the other hymns and with a general feeling of duple meter. The phrases are a bit irregular at the beginning of each verse. The leaders inject a kind of improvisory melisma to these verses (see 1.3). A melodic motive of the first verse is also variated in the succeeding verses:

Verse 1 

Verses 2
3
4
5 

This particular hymn also shows some polyphonic improvisations in the lower voice(s): 1.1 m.3; 1.3 ms. 6 and 7; 1.4 m.6.

The singing is continuous. There is hardly any gap between the verses — the leader immediately starts the next verse after reaching the final note of the previous verse.

This preliminary report points to several interesting data regarding the character of the ritual music of the *Iglesia del Ciudad Mistica de Dios*. The most significant is perhaps its close affinity to the Roman Catholic liturgical music. Some of the essential aspects of both music and practice of the orthodox churches have been preserved. On the other hand, the character of the music itself is of a more recent vintage, being based on the major and minor modes. While it is evident that the basic polyphonic and harmonic organizations had been formally composed, the music in general still preserves an individual quality as a result of the spontaneous fusion of western musical structures and local style of performance and musical articulation.

EARLY MORNING SERVICE

HYMN 1

Original Key: D major

1

2 *Faster p=120* *REFRAIN*
 kanyang panga-lan pu-ri-hin tin siy'ay pu-

3
 ri-hin any ngalan niyay pu-ri-hin a-ting ga-win la-ging ga-

4
 win any ngalan nya ay pu-ri-hin pu-ri-hin tin sydy pu-

5
 ri-hin any ngalan nya ay pu-ri-hin a-ting ga-win solo a-

6
 ting ga-win any ngalan nya ay pu-ri-hin kalul-wa

7
 koro ay magpasa-la-mat kay bat-ha-lang ma-

8
 gi-ging manga ma-saya na kanyang pa-ki-ki-

9
 ta ta-yo ay mag-pa-sa-la-mat kay Bat-

10
 ha-la-su bi-ya-ya at pay-i-big

REFRAIN

11 Ranyung paki - ki - tal pu - ri -

12 'tin sydy pu - ri - hin ang nya-lan n'ya ay pu - ri - hin a - slower

13 ting ga-win laginy ga-win ang ngalan n'ya ay pu - ri -

14 hin pu - ri - hin 'tin sydy pu - ri - hin ang ngalan n'ya ay

15 pu - ri - hin ating ga-win any laginy ga-win any ngalan

16 nya ay pu - ri - hin.

EARLY MORNING SERVICE

HYMN 2

Original Key: f-sharp minor

1 may-papasa-la-
 2 mat
 3 tang'ing pana-ta sabi-hin
 4 ng bu-ony bi-ya-ya ma-
 5 hal
 6 ng di-wa
 7
 8 i-nang na-min
 9 Ma-ri-a ay umi-yak
 10 ng Ro-sa mistika Bu-laklak

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

dala #aito su ligaya

i - na ko ang na-ti-

ra i - tong

Ky - ri - e e - le - ison # puri - hin

Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son a los tempes horror.

EARLY MORNING SERVICE

HYMN 3

Original Key: D major

p = 75

solo *choro*

1

2 na ka-to-to - na - nan

3 ay i - yang

4

5

6

7 i - na ma - i -

8 pa

9 pa - nahen mag - pa - ka - i - lan man na

10 a - mu ma - ma - tay

11  ta-o pag-i-big na tu-nay na i-a-

12  lay sata — o pag-i-big na tu-nay.

Detailed description: The image shows two staves of musical notation. Staff 11 is a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. It contains a melody of eighth and quarter notes with lyrics 'ta-o pag-i-big na tu-nay na i-a-'. Staff 12 is also a treble clef staff with the same key signature and time signature. It contains a melody of eighth and quarter notes with lyrics 'lay sata — o pag-i-big na tu-nay.'. The lyrics are written in a handwritten style below the notes.

EARLY MORNING SERVICE

HYMN 4

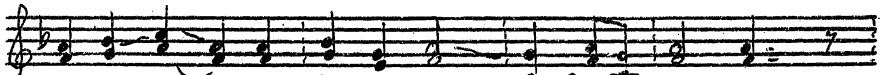
Original Key: C major

♩ = 60

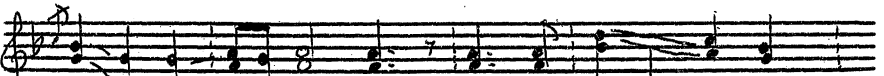
RDRD F3-7

-3-7 7

ging ma-nga-li-ya-ya nya-yon na ang naysa tu-wi ma-ma-hay ka o ta-ngi sa po-on na ta-han

11  *a-king*

12  *do*

13  *hi-nal*

14  *ma-hal ko ang panga-lan sa pu-ri'ng*

15  *ngalan bu-hay*

16  *ma la-gi*

17  *walang hang-gan.*

EVENING PROCESSION and CHAPEL SERVICE

LITANY OF THE SAINTS

P = c.76

1 kanang ko-ro prinatin ang Bathalang toto-o; angheles atsaka-

2 nang ko-ro prinatin ang Bathalang to-to-o Omnes sancte Evange-
apostoli et

3 lis-tae ora-te pro no-bis

4 Omnes sancte in-nocen-tes o-ra-te pro nobis

5 kamatayang mara-ra-has sa ulan, at bawat kid-

6 lat i-tong siphayo ay lu-nus higit na i-ni-li-ligtas REFRAIN

7 na ang si-no mang Kristyano na may di-bos-yong to-too ang-heles

8 sa-ka nang ko-ro prinatin ang Bathalang toto-o; Ang-he-

9 les sa-ka nang ko-ro prinatin ang Bathalang toto-o

10 [m = inaudible]

11 pagpa-pawan para-an i-yong tunay kumintang

REFRAIN

12 di na naitalo sa ating hamak nata-o Anyheles --- [etc.]

13 ng pag

14 ang sabi mo'y yong kasama-han i-tong bin-ya-

15 gan ang ka-away na i-to sa takot ay tu-matakb

16 **REFRAIN** sa han
Anyhe-les su --- [etc.]

17 di-to samundong ibabaw at doon sa ka-langi-tan

18 **REFRAIN**
bu-ong bayan ko ang pagpa-ra-ngal sa i-yo Anyheles --- [etc.]

19 ng sanlangit nang A-ma ko i-tong **REFRAIN**

20 tutu-nyo sa sanlangit nang A-ma ko, Ang-he-

21 ies sa-ka nang ko-ro prin natin ang Bathalang to-to-o

22 Anyhe-les sa-ka-nang ko-ro prin natin ang Bathalang

23 toto - o

24 Sinote Anto - ni o - ra pro nobis

25 - kaw Bathala na i sa tat - lo sa pagka per -

26 so - nu ti - nu - tawagkanatin tu - wi - na katawan sa

27 'ming dara - tal yamung any ka - a - wuan mo maki - ta do - on sa ta -
REFRAIN

28 c Anyheles 'sa - ka nang ko - ro prin natin any Bathalang toto - o

29 Anyheles 'sa - ka nang ko - ro prin natin any Bathalang toto - o

30

31 mahal da - langinun namin

32 ut yang di mano ka - no si - no ka ba - yang to - to - o; Anyheles --- [etc.]
REFRAIN

33

34 REFRAIN

35 Angheles... [etc.]

36 ngit la- ngi

37 tan lu- han sa kapangya- ri- han ng manya di- mon- yong hung-
hany at ang pagpi- pu- ring i- to Kalasag sa di- lany tukse

38 REFRAIN

39 Any- heles... [etc.] Pro pi- ti- us es- to parce nobis Domi- ne
Pro pi- ti- us es- to exaudi nos Domi- ne

Repeat lines 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

40

41 Ab- en- ni- ma- lo li- be- ranos Domi- ne → In die judicii... [etc.]

42 karaga- tan ng lupat ka-

43 so- na daan si- yang tu-

44 nay di ka magpa- ya sa a- ting hamak na ta- o

44 REFRAIN

Anyheles sa- Ru nang Ro- ro prin natini ang Bat ha- lany

45 to-to-o Ang-heles sa-ka nang ko-ro pr'in natin
 46 any Bathalang toto-o. Pecca-to-res te rogamus audi nos
 47

48 ut nobis indul-ge-as te rogamus au-di nos → Fili Dei... [etc.]
 49

49 kata-as-ta-a san na kay Bathalang katwi
 50 ran ay da-ti min'nyong kasamuhun na mangga binyagan
 51 REFRAIN

51 baya-an ka-amay na i-to sa takot ay tumatak-bo; Ang-he-
 52 les sa-ka nang ko-ro pr'in natin any Bathalang to-to-o

53 Anyheles sa-ka-nang ko-ro pr'in natin any Bathalang toto-o.
 54

55
 Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi; parce nobis, Domine
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi; exaudi nos, Domine
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi; miserere nobis

56 Ang subi ng kagali — nyan ay aminy i — na — a — sa —

57 han di — to sa mundong iba — baw at doon sa Ra — langi — tan

58 at ko ang bayan ko ang pagdaranyal sa i — yo Angheles... [etc.]

59 Pu — ri — hin ka naming toto — o ny

60 sanlangit ang A — ma ko pi — nu — pu — ri ri naming toto — o

61 sa sunlangi — tany manuk ko Anghe — les... [etc.] Pater noster

62 [prayers] nos — trum, A — men

HYMN 1

64 Repeat "Purihin" 59-61

Repeat "Bathala na ita" 25-29

65 Ang kagali — nyan

66 i — pi — naykali — ob sa mahai Runy i — pi Ra — gali — nyan ng bi —

67 **REFRAIN**
 ya—ya di mangag Rano pina—ka—ka sa ta—o Angheles... [etc.]

68
 Ayas si—si—nu —lat ng propetang si E—la —ya

69
 nay sa langit nauna ya

70
 ng tu—la—ran na—tin di—
REFRAIN

71
 to nu nana—mu—yan sa mundo Angheles 'sa--- [etc.]

72
 Pri—sa—yong mahal sa awit ng sangka—la—ngitan


73
 na ukol sa kapangya—ri—han sa munga di—mon—yong hung hung
REFRAIN

74
 at ang pagpupit—ring i—to kalasag sa di—lang tukso: Angheles... [etc.]

75
 Repeat "O kamatayang" 5-9

76
 sa kara—ga—tan na lubhang

77
 pagpa—pu—naw po. i—yang tunay kawawang

78 
di na nayta-lo sa aming hamak na tuo Anyheles...-[etc.]

79 Repeat "Kataastasan" 49-53

80 Repeat "Ang sabi" 56-58

81 Repeat "Purihin" 59-61

EVENING PROCESSION and CHAPEL SERVICE

HYMN 2

1 sa ma-hal ^o I-nang Bir-hen Ma-ri-

2 -a banal na-iwang mali-ga — ya

3 nak sa la-hat ang i ang a ^{yong a}

4 nak nak

5 u-u-gan ng i-yo pung si

6

7 sa a-ming da-ing namahay a-

8 [#]ro ay sa a-min mamahay Ra kung i-

9 -kaw na-i-wan sa

10 pu-so ny ka-la-ha-tan liwanag [#]i-i-ral li-

11 wany mi ang i — i — ral

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12 sa la-hat pa-tu-loy na

13 walang hum-pay ng do-on sa manga na-i-du-

14 yan wa-lang hang-gan.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for three staves. The first staff (labeled 12) contains the lyrics 'sa la-hat pa-tu-loy na'. The second staff (labeled 13) contains 'walang hum-pay ng do-on sa manga na-i-du-'. The third staff (labeled 14) contains 'yan wa-lang hang-gan.'. The music is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. There are some handwritten annotations, such as a sharp sign (#) above a note in the first staff and a '3' with a slur over a triplet in the second staff.