

INDIGENOUS DANCES OF AETAS

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Abstract. Indigenous Aeta dances are dances for enjoyment among the Aetas. Their dances are mostly imitations of their daily activities and mimicry of the movements of animals they see around them. Despite the popularity of indigenous dances from different provinces, Aeta dances remain unpublished although they are being performed in different tourist destinations in Pampanga and nearby provinces. How come there seem to be no published or notated Aeta dances? Granting the possibility that there may be published Aeta dances, such publication is probably very limited. It is for this reason that the researchers created choreography or theatrical interpretation of Aeta dances. The researchers conducted a qualitative study. The result reveals that there are 15 Aeta dances being performed by the elders and teenagers. The study also sought to ensure that the researchers created a dance following the authenticity of movement and historical background.

Keywords: indigenous, creative choreography, theatrical interpretation, notated dance, mimicry, Aeta

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1. Introduction

The things that people do in their everyday life which have been passed on from generation to generation form part of history. These daily activities are part of the cultural traits of a given group of people. It is said that among the great sources of the country's cultural tradition are the folk and ethnic dances. Throughout history, dances have been performed to serve various purposes that different groups of people have such as to pay respect or show reverence to their ancestors and to celebrate significant moments in their lives as a community. In the Philippines, Filipino artists and scholars use dances in their attempt to rediscover, redefine, and document culture and history.

This paper presents the results of the researchers' attempt to explore, describe, document, and notate the dances of the Aeta communities that form part of the

research locale. In exploring the said communities' native dances, the study aimed to rediscover the preserved cultural practices of the Aetas that form part of the rich Philippine culture and history and eventually promote the preservation of such practices in the hope of: 1) obtaining due recognition of the Aeta culture as a significant part of Pampanga's history; 2) coming up with a comprehensive depiction of the local heritage and traditions to which the emerging development of the province is rooted; 3) recognizing and spreading traditional Aeta dances that remain to be performed in Pampanga, and 4) popularizing Aeta dances through notating them and teaching them to the students, most especially to dance groups so these dances become part of their repertoire. Ultimately, the researchers aimed to contribute to the preservation and passing on of this native dances that depict the ceremonies, mimicry of the surrounding nature, environment and animal movements, their life cycle, and other facets of Aeta culture to the generations to come.

According to Encyclopedia of American Studies (2010), dances reflect the society in which they exist. Dances, specifically folk and tribal dances, tell stories about the village, about culture, or the way of life of every group of individuals.

There are different dances in different communities which tell stories that define the culture of the place. Many dances have been passed on for centuries from generation to generation and they are just as important to indigenous people of today as they were when they were initially performed.

Reed (2007) describes dancing as a form of amusement among the Aetas which serves as an outlet for their naturally enthusiastic spirit. However, to everybody in the tribe, dancing is not generally indulged, but two or three in every tribe are especially skilled at it. There are several Aeta dances which are considered mimetic dances, and they indeed have mimicking or special Aeta character, such as the monkey dance, the bee dance, the lover's dance, and the battle dance. Many of these dances prove to have other purposes aside from amusements, which according to Fabian (2010), among which is the anituan, is a perfect example of an Aeta dance that uses the native guitar known as *givaran bakil* or *gitaha* as musical accompaniment. Anituan is a kind of group healing routine in which sick people sit in a line on the ground, with their heads and shoulders is covered by a long red cloth which represents the ailment being cured. During the *manganito séance* Aetas perform the *talipe* as their dancing style. *Talipe* is a dance where a woman acts as a medium. The woman begins to perform at the center of the house where the patient is placed in front of his or her relatives for clearing. Aetas believe that dancing makes possible for one to be in contact with caring spirits. Other known Aeta dances are the *pinapanilan* which is a re-enactment of bee hunting, the *sekuting* which is a mock battle dance performed by two men with sticks and the *binabayani* which is a war dance documented among the Baluga but in a different version that portrays the story of a working woman in the fields who has been kidnapped by an Aeta (Shimizu 1989).

The developments of dance in the Philippines match the history of the culture. The heterogeneous features brought about by geographical barriers, the isolation

of various national cultural communities, and the diverse foreign influences brought to the land at various periods have resulted in an extensive variety of dances. Variety is not only in terms of movements and steps but also in terms of costumes, music, spirit, purpose, and characters emerging from the people's idiosyncrasies, temperament, and inherent traits (Alejandro and Abad-Santos 2002).

Among the prominent local dances of the Aetas in Pampanga is the anituan or curing séance. The anituan is a dramatic performance in which the medium, in a trance, also casts a hypnotic spell over the audience. Later, a dialogue ensues between the audience and the 'captured' spirit causing the disease. Another is the talek which is the mimicry of the animals in their environment. Variations of the talek include the talek bake (monkey), talek lango (fly), talek barak (monitor lizard), and talek paro (shrimp). The talek barak is a unique invitation of two lizards slithering over bamboo poles, trellises and fences, skilfully clinging to trees and rocks, and finally resting after a day's work. According to Gabao (2015), Pulot Panilan is an Aeta dance performed by a honey collector. The dance demonstrated the gathering of honey from hives. Pulot Panilan is categorized as an occupational dance.

The dances of the Aetas may be categorized into two types: 1) festive dancing and 2) ceremonial dancing. Festive dancing is mainly performed when meeting friends, after a good hunt, or when there is a group feeling of happiness. Among such dances is the binabayani of the Pinatubo Aetas, the borokil of the Agtas, and the war dances of the Iriga Aetas. On the other hand, ceremonial dancing has more specific purposes such as religious dancing which is almost always held during the full moon, and which lasts into the wee hours of the night. According to Romualdez (1973), most of the dances of the Aetas are accompanied by their own instruments. A native type of guitar called the gitaha, is the leading instrument used by the Aetas to accompany their dances. The Aetas have many types of songs which range from solemn to melodious, rapid, high, low, or soft, depending on the sentiments expressed. The singing may be performed standing or sitting, with the singers arranged in a circle facing one another, while those who manipulate the gong or other instruments sit outside (Noval-Morales and Monan 1979).

Dance literature according to Aquino (1965) and Ramos (2003), should be composed of the following: a) dance title which refers to the depiction of the nature of the dance; b) historical background, refers to the synopsis of the dance; c) costume, the attire of the performers which best represent nature, culture and its origin; d) time signature, refers to the number of beats per measure; e) props, refers to the equipment or materials the performers are using during their performance; f) dance steps, refers to the movement of the foot, arm and as a whole their interpretation of the nature of the dance through bodily movements; and g) music score, the music accompaniment written in the music sheet. Even up to now the outline of writing dance literature by Aquino is being followed by the Philippine Folk Dance Society (2016), all of their series from I to IX followed the outline introduced by Aquino.

In view of the foregoing body of literature on Aeta dances, the researchers would like to document the different indigenous dances of the Aetas in Pampanga.

The said documentation hopes to add a humble contribution to the body of knowledge on the topic available in the libraries for use by dance teachers, Aeta communities, Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH) majors, dance enthusiasts, and future dance researchers.

The researchers aimed to study and trace the indigenous dances of Aetas in Pampanga; specifically attempting to answer the following problems:

1. How may the indigenous dances of Aetas in Pampanga be described in terms of:
 - 1.1 Dance title
 - 1.2 Historical background
 - 1.3 Steps
 - 1.4 Music
 - 1.5 Costume
 - 1.6 Props
2. What are the different Indigenous Aeta dances that could be found in Pampanga?
3. How may indigenous dances of Aetas in Pampanga are presented through creative choreography?

The study was limited on the documentation of the indigenous dances of an Aeta tribe in Pampanga, which are considered unpublished, especially their respective dance patterns or movements. The dance title, historical background, costumes, music, props, and dance steps served as bases for the development of the creative Aeta dances. The study focused on the documentation and identification of the existing dances of the Aetas in the research locale. The creative choreography developed by the researchers were based on the documented tribe traditional dances, the historical backgrounds of the given dances and the concept provided by the elders of the Aeta community in Pampanga. The creative Aeta dances were developed and evaluated on the basis of the perceptions given by the experts in the given field. Trial of the creative Aeta dances was not part of the scope of the study; however, the creative Aeta dances were used in actual rehearsal by the HAU Dance Theatre to help the researchers ascertain the effectiveness of the movements and measurements and identify the figures that need to be improved.

2. Method

This study employed the qualitative type of research in order for the researchers to explore and accurately and comprehensively describe the dances of the people under study. The study is descriptive in nature; hence guided by Gay, et al. (2008), the researchers collected relevant data to answer questions concerning the current status of the study and documented all data gathered from the informants and elders accurately and comprehensively. The study was conducted in a selected Aeta community in Pampanga. Selected members of the said of selected Aeta community

served as the respondents of this study. Purposively selected key informants and elders from the tribe were interviewed. They were selected on the basis of referral on account of their knowledge in relation to dance culture by their respective tribe leader. The researchers used structured and unstructured interviews depending on which was suitable for the respondents. Also, the researchers used video recording in documenting the indigenous dances of the Aetas.

The researchers asked permission from the chairman of the barangay and the tribe leader through formal letters. Interview was conducted among different elders to gather relevant information in relation to the different indigenous Aeta dances. Data were collected through a focus group discussion with the respondents and video documentation of the dances as performed by the elders.

The researchers made use of purposive sampling technique in the selection of three Aeta dances to choreograph based on the documented unpublished Aeta dances. Through the fish bowl technique three Aeta dances were drawn from the unpublished Aeta dances identified by the respondents during the focus group discussion. The researchers prepared choreography for these selected dances.

The data that were gathered from the Aeta community were analyzed using documentary analysis. The researchers conducted actual and documentary observation to document all the possible unpublished dances of the Aetas. The creative choreography of the Aeta dances was subjected to an evaluation by dance experts in order to get feedback on how to improve the dances created by the researchers.

3. Result and discussion

Presented below are the results of the study on the different indigenous dances of the Aetas in Pampanga.

3.1. Description of the creative Aeta choreography

Dance titles

These refer to the name that was given to best describe or designate the dance. Aeta dance title usually follows the name of the animals that they imitate and their daily activities.

Historical background

This is the account of the idea and overview of the dance. It gives the identity of the dance based on the culture, ideas, custom, tradition and daily activities of the Aeta.

Dance steps

These refer to a sequence of foot and arm movements that make up a particular dance. Aeta dance steps directly imitate the movement of animals and their daily activities.

Music

These refer to the melody accompaniment of a certain dance. Aeta usually use the native guitar known as givaran bakil or gitaha to accompany their dances. Also they use flute and bamboo to accompany their dance.

Costumes

This is the materials that Aeta wear during their dance presentation. Usually this is their traditional outfit known as lubay – underclothes that male Aeta wear and tapis – a cloth that female Aeta wear to cover their body from top to bottom. Young women wear a wraparound skirts. Elder women wear bark cloth, while elder men wear loin clothes. The old men of the Aeta wear a bark cloth strip that passes between the legs, and is attached to a string around the waist.

Props

These refer to the materials or items that Aeta use or manipulate to best describe their dance and movement.

3.2. The indigenous dances of Aetas in Pampanga

- a) Anituan – a curing séance dance.
- b) Batong Baboy – a dance that shows how to catch and transport a pig using bamboo pole.
- c) Binabayani – a war dance of the Aeta.
- d) Ehad – the way Aeta plant along hillside.
- e) Himbu-Himbu – a dance that calls for the Nature Spirit.
- f) Lapinding – a dance that looks for a partner for making love.
- g) Patetet – a dance to cure a sick person.
- h) Pinapanilan – is a re-enactment of bee hunting.
- i) Talek Bake – a dance that imitates / mimics the movement of a monkey.
- j) Talek Barak – a dance that imitates / mimics the movement of a lizard.
- k) Talek Hipon – a dance that imitates / mimics the movement of a shrimp.
- l) Talek Langew – a dance that imitates / mimics the movement of flies.
- m) Talek Manok – a dance that imitates / mimics the movement of a bird.
- n) Talek Palo-Palo or Talek Lango – a dance that imitates / mimics the movement of a butterfly.
- o) Talipe – is a dance where a woman acts as a medium.

3.3. Creative choreography of some Aeta dances; based on the traditional Aeta movement

A) EHAD

Title:

Ehad (Sayaw Pagtatanim in Tagalog, Planting Dance in English and Terak Pamananam in Pampango)

Historical background:

A dance that depicts the way Aeta plant seeds on the hillside. This is by using a bamboo stick to dig the ground by the male farmer and the female farmer will plant seeds. During planting the elder female farmers lead in planting the seeds and they are being followed by the younger ones.

Costume:

Male performer wears lubay. Female wears tapis

Time Signature:

3/4 (1,2,3) and 2/4 (1,2; 1 and 2 and; 1, and 2)

Props:

Bamboo pole, coconut shell, seeds

Formation

				X
	O3	O2	O1	

X – male dancer
 O1 – eldest female dancer
 O2 – younger dancer
 O3 – youngest dancer

Dance Steps

AETA WALK – step R foot forward, at the same time place L foot closer to R foot slightly lifted, at the same time sway the hip to the right. Do the same starting on L foot. Do this alternately.

Intro

- a) Male and female show praise and offer their activity to Apo Namalyari their God for more bountiful outcome. Male and female dancers raise their arms with open palm upward and head up, (counts 1, 2) then bring the arms downward passing along the front of their body, at the same time slightly bend their body (counts 1, 2). Do this for two times 4 M
- b) Male picks up the bamboo pole in front (cts. 1, 2). Then positions it in front of his body, right hand gripping on top of the bamboo pole shoulder level and the left hand gripping the lower part of the bamboo pole hip level (cts. 1, 2). While the female sits on heels (cts. 1, 2) then places the coconut shell with seeds on the ground (cts. 1, 2). 4 M

Figure I**Kutchuyan Muya / Digging the Plot / Pamumungkal Gabun / Pagbubungkal ng Lupa**

- a) Facing the audience execute two gallop step to the right (cts. 1, 2, 1, 2) (while doing the gallop step, dig the ground using the bamboo pole) 2 M
- b) Repeat a on the left side (starting with the left foot) 2 M
- c) Repeat a and b, 3 more times 12 M
- d) Facing the female dancers, repeat a-c 16 M

Female

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| a) After 8 M of the male dancers, enter ladies. Execute Aeta walking movement from the side moving forward and end at the side of the male dancer. | 8 M |
| b) Kneel in place. Hold and place the coconut shell in your lap. | 2 M |
| c) Pause for 6 measure | 6 M |
| d) Place the coconut shell with seeds on the floor/ground slightly forward right. | 3 M |
| e) Fix the lower part of the dress / tapis. This is where the seeds will be placed. | 4 M |
| f) Hold the lower, middle part of the dress / tapis with her left hand | 1 M |
| g) Extend right arm at the side to get seeds from the coconut shell and place the seeds on your dress / tapis right on top of your lap (cts 1,2,1,2) | 2 M |
| h) Repeat g twice | 4 M |
| i) Stand up and finish in slightly bended knee with the torso leaning slightly forward. | 2 M |

Figure II**Mananem / Planting / Pamananam / Pagtatanim**

Male

- | | |
|--|------------|
| a) Step right foot forward (ct. 1), hop on the right foot (ct. 2) (while doing the foot-work dig the ground to be able to make a hole with the use of the bamboo pole) | 1 M |
| b) Repeat A starting with the left foot | 1 M |
| c) Repeat A and B alternately 6 more times | 6 M |
| d) Repeat a-c moving backward | 8 M |
| e) Repeat a-d | 16 M |

Female

- | | |
|--|------------|
| a) Execute Aeta walk moving forward. While doing the walking movement get a seed on their dress with their R hand for 1 measure and drop it into the hole. | 8 M |
| b) Repeat the move backward | 8 M |
| c) Repeat a and b | 16 M |

Note: While the male dancer performs figure II, the female dancers follow at the side but slightly backward to drop the seeds.

Figure III**Pamagdilig / Watering of Plant / PamagdiligTanaman / PagdiligngHalaman**

Male

- | | |
|---|------------|
| a) Execute a heel sitting position (cts. 1, 2, 1, 2) and place the bamboo pole in front of you. | 2 M |
| b) Pause for 14 M | 14 M |
| c) Execute an Aeta walk forward starting with your R foot and assist the female dancers in watering the plant | 8 M |
| d) Repeat c moving backward. Still starting with the R foot. | 8 M |

Female

- | | |
|---|------------|
| a) Execute an Aeta walk forward starting with your R foot for 8 M. And water the plant by pouring small amount of water for every 2 M | 8 M |
| b) Repeat the move backward. Still starting with the R foot | 8 M |
| c) Repeat a and b | 16 M |

Figure IV (Finale)

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| a) Male and female place their props on the floor (cts. 1,2,1,2), then stand straight (cts. 1, 2, 1, 2) | 4 M |
| b) Both performers execute a vow by raising their arms with open hands upward (cts. 1,2), then bring the arms downward at the same time bend the body slightly forward (cts. 1, 2). | 2 M |
| c) Repeat b | 2 M |

- d) Male and female performers pick up their props on the floor (cts. 1,2,1,2), then stand straight (1,2,1,2) 4 M
- e) Both dancers execute Aeta walk moving toward the side for their exit 20 M

B) SAYAW PALO-PALO

Title:

Sayaw Palo – Palo (Butterfly Dance in English; Sayaw Paro-Paro in Tagalog; Terak Paru-Paru in Pampango)

Historical background:

Aetas are nature lovers. They care for mountains and the entire nature for that are their place, community and way of life. They plant fruit bearing plants, vegetables and flowering plants for that is their major source of living. With that way of life, the Aetas even created a beautiful habitat for animals to live in. Like the butterfly that sucks nectar from their flowering plants. Nature gives the Aetas the inspiration to have a meaningful life. Aeta children and even old Aetas have fun playing and catching butterflies. Being a nature lover Aetas start imitating movements of any living thing that they could enjoy, such as the butterfly and other creatures, animals that live within their community. Palo-palo is a dance that imitates the movement of a butterfly.

Costume:

Male performer wears lubay. Female wear tapis

Time Signature:

1/2 – One, two to a measure

Props:

None

Dance Steps:

Sulagpo A = Fold arms and place them on chest level in a close fist as the starting position. Flip arms downward count 1, then bring the folded arms upward shoulder high and then repeat the flipping of arm count 2, and.

Sulagpo B = Arms in second position, right or left arm vaguely downward and the other arm upward as starting position. Flip the hands together with the forearm softly downward for count “1”; then flip the hands together with the forearm softly upward for count “and”, and then repeat the flipping of the hands movement for counts “2”, and “and”.

Shuffling = Execute small steps on the balls of the feet as many times as required.

Heel Brush = Step R (L) foot in fourth (ct. 1), brush L (R) foot forward.

Saludo = Partners bow to each other, to the audience, opposite dancers, or to the neighbors with feet together.

Intro

- a) Dancers show praise and offer their activity to Apo Namalyari their God for a more bountiful outcome. Dancers facing the audience raise both arms with open palm upward and head up, (counts 1, 2) then bring the arms downward passing in front of your body at the same time slightly bend your body (counts 1, 2). Do this for two times 4 M
- b) Repeat (a) facing partner. 4 M

Figure I
Learning how to fly
 (Partners facing the audience)

- a) Execute shuffling movements with knees slightly bent moving forward at the same time execute sulagpo movement A for four times 4 M
- b) Repeat (a) moving backward arms as in (a) 4 M
- c) Repeat (a) and (b) clockwise and counterclockwise 8 M
- d) Repeat all 16 M

Figure II
Flying with other small butterfly
 (Partners facing each other)

- a) Execute shuffling movement, partners meet in the center, arms execute sulagpo A movement for four times 4 M
- b) Female leans to partner's right shoulder while flipping the arms. Male does the same on the other side 4 M
- c) Repeat (a) going to partner's place, finish facing partner 4 M
- d) Execute shuffling movement turning clockwise in place 4 M
- e) Repeat all, passing left to left shoulder 16 M

Figure III
Mastering the manner of flying and roaming around
 (Partners facing audience)

- a) Execute heel brush alternately in place for 1 M to the right, arms execute sulagpo A 1 M
- b) Repeat (a) but arm execute sulagpo B for 1 M 1 M
- c) Repeat (a-b)(execute sulagpo B on the other side) 2 M
- d) Females execute (a-c) while males turn clockwise around the female dancers, arm execute sulagpo B. 4 M
- e) Repeat a-c 4 M
- f) Males execute (a-c) while females turn counterclockwise around the male dancers, arm execute sulagpo B. 4 M
- g) Repeat all 16 M

Figure IV
Raising with other butterfly
 (Open Formation)

- a) Partners execute heel brush, arms execute sulagpo B going to single circle formation facing center 8 M
- b) Females move to the center with the right shoulder forward, arms and feet as in (a). Males move away from the circle, arms and feet as in girls 4 M
- c) Females turn right about and back to single circle formation 4 M
- d) Repeat (b) and (c) male moving toward the center and female away from the center 8 M
- e) Partners go back to original place and execute saludo 8 M

C) LAPINDING

Title:

Lapinding (Search for Partner, Paghanap ng Makakaisang dibdib in Tagalog and Pamanintun Apangasawa in Pampango)

Historical Background:

A dance whose male Aeta searching for a partner. Female Aeta who is single can participate in the ritual. Throughout the ritual the female Aeta express their beautiful movement in dance so that they will be selected by the male Aeta. After the show of movements by the female dancers, male Aeta will select one female to be his partner in life.

Costume:

Male performer wears lubay. Female wear tapis.

Time signature:

1/2 – One, two to a measure

Props:

Bilao with fruits

Introduction:

The head of the tribe performs a chant with a bilao full of fruits as an offering to Apo Namalyari their God of love in preparation for the ritual dance of propagation.

Figure I

(Horizontal Line Formation – Female; Male in front of the middle girl dancer; all facing audience)

- | | |
|---|------------|
| a) Female enter in line formation while executing the close step for 16 times starting with the (R) foot (position of the arms and its movement = bend right arm upward in 90 degrees and slightly bend the forearm leveled to your chin; while the (L) arm is bent and placed to the level of your chest. Both hands are close fist; flip the arm in downward accent for every close step). Finish in line formation facing audience | 8 M |
| b) Execute arms forward downward, palms facing up (2m) and raise arms forward upward (2m). Male enters executing movement as in female in figure (a), finish in front of the female. | 4 M |
| c) Female repeat b while the male continues to enter | 4 M |
| d) Male executes arms forward downward, palms facing up (2m) and raise arms forward upward (2m) in place, while female move in quadrille formation, movements as in (a) | 4 M |
| e) Male repeats figure (d) turning clockwise together with the female | 12 M |

Figure II

(Female – circle formation; Male – stay at the center of the circle)

- a) Female repeat (a) in figure I as they execute the close steps turning around the male clockwise, while the male dancer execute same movement with that of the female turning counterclockwise in place. 8 M
- b) Repeat (a) in reverse direction 8 M
- c) Dancers go to a line formation, movements as in (a) male finish facing female 1 8 M
- d) Raise both arms obliquely upward-forward (1m), then obliquely downward-forward (1m). Repeat for four times. 8 M

Figure III

(Horizontal Line Formation- Female; Male in front of the first female dancer)

(Male)

- a) Execute 16 close step passing around the female in zigzag movement finishing at the back of female 4. Arm movement similar to (a) of figure I. 8 M
- b) Turn right about (2m) male executes close steps movement going back to the starting position of figure III, arms same movement as in (a) for (6m) 8 M

(Female)

- a) Execute 16 close steps in place while flipping the bended arms in chest level 8 M
- b) Turn to left count 1,2, 1,2(2m) female execute the swaying of the hip with the while flipping of their bended arm chest level (6m) 8 M

(Male and Female)

- c) Dancers move to an open formation with the boy at the middle front, movements as in (a) 8 M
- d) Raise both arms obliquely upward-forward (1m), then obliquely downward-forward (1m). Repeat for four times. 8 M

Figure IV

(Horizontal Line Formation- Female; Male in front of the middle female dancer; all facing audience)

(Male)

- a) Execute close steps (4m) moving forward and (4m) moving backward with arms swinging cross in front. 8 M
- b) Male goes to a full knee bent position with the twisting of the body with arms swinging right and left alternately (in, out, in, out) 8 M

(Female)

- a) Female execute full knee bend with the twisting of the hips and arms swinging right and left alternately 8 M
- b) Female execute close steps (4m) moving forward and (4m) moving backward with arms swinging in front. 8 M

(Male and Female)

- c) Male executes close steps moving around the female clockwise with arms swinging in front, while the female execute flirting movements 8 M
- d) Repeat (c) moving counterclockwise and pausing in front of the female of his choice in the last measure 8 M

4. Summary, conclusion and recommendations

The study was conducted in order to come up with creative Aeta dances. The researchers have been handling professional subjects in music, arts, physical

education and health for several years, and they have been annually teaching rhythmic dances where folk dances are among the major components. Their expertise in their field of specialization, coupled with their experience in teaching and in attending national workshops and conferences on Philippine folk dances, enabled them to choreograph creative Aeta dances from the unpublished Aeta dances which are enjoyable and at the same time educational.

Based on the foregoing study, there are fifteen (15) dances traced and identified to be performed by the Aetas of Pampanga. Most of their dances were adopted from imitating the actions of the animals and other creatures in their community. Some dances are part of the rituals and religious practices of their tribe. Aeta dances do not use specific terminologies for their dance steps. Movements directly follow the action carried out by the imitated animals and or any creature. Also there are dance movements which are based on the process of their day to day activities.

The researchers were able to create three (3) sets of dance choreography out of the fifteen identified dances of the Aetas of Pampanga, namely: a) Ehad, also known as Sayaw Pagtanim; b) Lapinding, a dance where the male performer is in search of a female partner; and c) Palo-Palo, a dance that imitates the movements of a butterfly. The movement, music, props and history were derived from the original dance presentations of the Aetas. This is to retain the authenticity of the dance. The researchers further explored the enhancement of the musicality, and the flow of movement based on the history of each dance, and made it into a theatrical presentation. The creative dance along with their historical background, props, costumes, and dance notations were prepared and presented to dance experts for their perusal. Revisions were made based on the suggestions of the dance experts consulted.

From the foregoing findings the researchers concluded that there are no published Aeta dances. They are only shown in YouTube and are being performed by Aetas in their communities and different tourist spots in Pampanga. The design of the creative Aeta dances was patterned after the existing fundamental/standard dance movements across available Philippine folk dances. The efficiency of the created Aeta dance choreography was verified through an actual rehearsal by the HAU Dance Theatre. The creative Aeta dances may perhaps now be added to the line-up of dances being performed by the different dance troupes in Pampanga and may also help in the advocacy towards the preservation of the dance culture of the Aeta communities in Pampanga.

Therefore, the researchers hereby recommend the following to the future researchers: they should continue researching the Aeta dances not only in Pampanga, but in the whole of Region 3 where there are Aeta communities, and that they may start producing creative or theatrical choreography with indigenous Aeta dances. The notation of the dance patterns of the created Aeta dances is encouraged, and the different performing dance troupes in Pampanga and dance teachers should make use of these creative dances as part of their repertoire of some Aeta indigenous dances.

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