

Wei-Ya Lin

Univerza za glasbo in upodabljajoče umetnosti Dunaj
University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna

Maataw – the Floating Island: Performing Social and Ecological Change among Tao People

Maataw – plavajoči otok: Izvajanje družbene in ekološke spremembe pri ljudstvu Tao

Prejeto: 5. september 2016
Sprejeto: 7. oktober 2016

Received: 5th September 2016
Accepted: 7th October 2016

Ključne besede: Tao/Yami, ekologija, aplikativna etnomuzikologija, nuklearni odpadki, Maataw

Keywords: Tao/Yami, ecology, applied ethnomusicology, nuclear waste, Maataw

IZVLEČEK

Pričujoči prispevek se ukvarja s plesnim gledališkim projektom *Maataw*, ki temelji na etnomuzikološkem raziskovanju pri ljudstvu Tao/Yami, enemu izmed šestnajstih staroselskih ljudstev Tajvana. Projekt splošno javnost ozavešča o ekoloških problemih, s katerimi je ljudstvo soočeno in pojasnjuje pripadajoče politične okoliščine. Prispevek analizira tudi vpliv tovrstnega angažiranega umetniškega projekta na javno mnenje.

ABSTRACT

This article addresses dance theatre project *Maataw*, which is based on ethnomusicological research among the Tao/Yami people, one of sixteen recognized indigenous groups of Taiwan. The project transmits ecological problems they are facing and the corresponding political issues to general audiences. The article also analyses the public impact of this engaged artistic project.

*I heard someone coming who wants to poison us.
Tao/Yami people are sad, nobody had helped us.
We are not able to resist the foreigners from Taiwan.*

Tao singer: Hsie Chia-Hui (謝家輝)



Figure 1: Final scene of the performance *Maataw* 浮島 – the Floating Island, premiered by the Formosan Aboriginal Song and Dance Troupe (FASDT) on 22nd January 2016. Photo taken by Huang Yu-Shun 黃裕順.

Hsie Chia-Hui's 謝家輝¹ lyrics, sung at the very end of the dance theatre performance *Maataw* 浮島 – the Floating Island (Fig.1) with *anood* (story-telling) melody type, express the Tao/Yami² people's acrimony and hopelessness. A lie by the Taiwanese government and *TaiPower Company*³ sealed the fate of the Tao: for thirty years, they have been struggling in constant protests against the nuclear waste storage on their home island, dealing with poor harvests and facing an increase of cancer occurrences.

The present article describes and analyzes the process of staging an artistic performance based on ethnomusicological and anthropological findings.⁴ The performance entitled *Maataw* 浮島 – the Floating Island recounts the struggle and desperation of the Tao indigenous group in Taiwan. Conflicts and difficulties that appeared during the realization of this production are identified, based on the author's own participant observation and experience from an ethnomusicological perspective. After introducing

1 Taiwanese and Chinese names will be given in the local convention throughout this paper, that is Last name First-name and in Chinese spelling.

2 The term 'Yami' was invented by Japanese anthropologist Torii Ryuzo (島居龍藏, 1870–1953). 'Yami' has no meaning in the Tao language. Most local people refer to themselves as Tao, therefore this term is consistently used in the article.

3 This issue will be more detailed explained later in the section *Social and Ecological Change in the Society of the Tao*.

4 For a broader sense of applied ethnomusicology, including the use of artistic production for a general audience, see Pettan and Titon, 2015.

the *Formosan Aboriginal Song and Dance Troupe* 原舞者 and the Production *Maataw* 浮島 – *the Floating Island*, a background information about the Tao people and their traditional environment management is presented, followed by an overview of social and ecological changes occurring during the past decades. In the second half of the article, the content of the artistic production, problems and difficulties that had to be addressed during its preparation, and reactions from the general public and professional critics are resumed. Dilemmas and prejudices that surfaced in the discussions following the premiere are identified and analysed in detail. These difficulties reflect facets of the interconnected and multi-layered power relations between the society of the Tao and the Taiwanese majority context, and not least the intermediary scholars and artists involved.

In order to understand both the problems faced in the production process and the bigger picture of power relations between all involved stakeholders it is necessary to ask: Which strategies can be applied to efficiently deal with initial misunderstandings between indigenous people and urban artists? Can an artistic project like *Maataw* convincingly represent ecological and political issues of the Tao, and satisfactory for the Tao? And what insights about power relations between the marginalized and the majority can be gained from the discussions raised? How are these power relations (de)constructed and how can they be bridged? These issues are addressed, and some general remarks about the feasibility of artistic productions for promoting and empowering the subaltern conclude the article.

Background

The Formosan Aboriginal Song and Dance Troupe and the Production Maataw – the Floating Island

The dance theatre production *Maataw* 浮島 – *the Floating Island* is conceptualized, developed, and realized in close cooperation with representatives of the Tao. It intends to transmit the Tao people's opinions and emotional statements to a national audience and to initiate public discussion. Therefore, this project serves as an exemplary case study for active engagement in the field of applied ethnomusicology.⁵

The *Formosan Aboriginal Song and Dance Troupe* (FASDT, 原舞者) was founded in 1991, strongly supported by a group of anthropologists, theatre administrators, practitioners, as well as cultural activists, who worried about the accelerating process of social change and cultural loss among indigenous groups in Taiwan. It is the oldest and best-known professional performance troupe focusing on indigenous peoples' dance and music in Taiwan. From the beginning, FASDT has been adopting anthropological methods like fieldwork and conducting interviews; thus its approach to artistic productions is based on a collaborative learning process with indigenous communities.

5 Svanibor Pettan, "Applied Ethnomusicology and Empowerment Strategies: Views from across the Atlantic," *Muzikološki Zbornik* 44/1 (2008): 85–100.

Consequently, indigenous dance and music, as well as culture in general, are presented and disseminated in an innovative and egalitarian way. In order to keep FASDT financially sustained, the *Formosan Indigenous Dance Foundation of Culture and Arts* 財團法人原舞者文化藝術基金會 (FIDFCA) was founded in 2001. By 2013, FASDT has produced close to twenty⁶ full-length productions about, and together with, different indigenous groups. In all these performances, FASDT insists in employing only indigenous performers with the declared aim to support and to promote the respective indigenous groups. Because of this attitude and its claim of quality, FASDT has earned high esteem from indigenous communities, artists, and scholars in field of cultural studies and performing arts in Taiwan.⁷ At the same time, the dance troupe is a representative example for wider-than-academic applied and artistic research.⁸

The production *Maataw* 浮島 – *the Floating Island* was premiered on 22nd of January 2016 at the Taiwan National Theatre, National Performing Arts Center in Taipei City. The premiere was followed by two more presentations at the same venue, and five consecutive performances in several Taiwanese cities. It was the second attempt to combine contemporary choreography and stage setting after *Pu'ing: Searching the Atayal Route* 找路 (2013)⁹. Nevertheless, it was the FASDT's first collaboration ever with the Tao people. According to FASDT's artistic director Su Huai-Shao 蘇懷劭,¹⁰ the troupe twice attempted to work with the Tao in the past, but this was impossible due to a lack of trust between the dance troupe and Tao representatives.

Fortunately, through the initiatives of the anthropologists Hu Tai-Li 胡台麗 (head of the Department of Ethnology at Academia Sinica) and Yang Cheng-Hsien 楊政賢 (assistant professor at National Dong Hwa University), both who have studied Tao society for several decades, the situation changed: since they are board members of the FIDFCA foundation and have by now obtained academic positions of sufficient influence, they could convince other board members to envision a production based on the culture of the Tao. In winter 2013, Yang Cheng-Hsien witnessed that I was preparing a concert performance at Taipei National Theatre, in which I applied my ethnomusicological research findings. The concert was entitled *SoundScape—Island of Human Beings* (人生風景-融合篇) and scheduled on 30th of September 2014. It combined western contemporary art music with singing traditions of the Tao, highlighting the equal quality of both traditions. Four elder Tao singers, five Austrian and six Taiwanese composers and musicians collaborated in this endeavour (details will be available in Lin in

6 Email from Chao Chi-Fang 趙綺芳 – the executive producer of FASDT and anthropologist on 28th of December 2015.

7 Among others: Ta-Chuan Sun, 孫大川. 台灣原住民族漢語文學選集: 評論卷 (*Anthology of Chinese Literature by Taiwan Aboriginal: Volume of Comments*) (Taipei: Ink publisher, 2003). Shih-Chung Hsieh, 謝世忠. 族群人類學的宏觀探索: 臺灣原住民論集 (*Discovery about the Ethnical Anthropology: Study-Collection about Taiwanese Indigenous Peoples*) (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2004). Yu-Hsiu Lu, 呂鈺秀. 臺灣音樂史 (*Taiwan Music History*) (Taipei: Wu-Nan, 2004). Ya-Ting Tan, 譚雅婷. 台灣原住民樂舞與文化展演的探討—以「原舞者」為例 (*A deep probe into the aboriginal songs and dances in Taiwan as well as its cultural performances – The Formosa Aboriginal Song and Dance Troupe*) (Taipei: Master thesis at Department of Musicology at Taiwan Normal University, 2004).

8 M. Biggs, H. Karlsson, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* (London: Routledge, 2010).

9 Email from Chao Chi-Fang 趙綺芳 on 28th of December 2015. More details about the production process in Chinese, accessed on September 1, 2016, <http://www.apc.gov.tw/portal/getfile?source=DBE50CC4AED2CB00FAFB9859EF31AC3BF7F73AB93585A98D11C41C37ACAE3814070622CE79EDCE39768D1276B57E0A04D0636733C6861689&filename=BD28F710038776245DA5D67D243E422383F7F4FA9BCA89777AA02517F0CE4F1A>

10 Mr. Su belongs to the indigenous group Amis, and his vernacular language name is Faidaw Fagod.

print). Recognizing this event, the colleagues of the FIDFCA foundation reckoned that it was the ‘right’ timing, and so they decided to compete with three more indigenous performance institutions for the funds announced by the Taiwanese *Council of Indigenous Peoples* 原住民族委員會 in 2014. Finally, an amount of 20,080,000 NTD (around EUR 544,300 by 14th of May 2016) was awarded to FIDFCA for the production *Maataw*. With that, this endeavour became the most ambitious performing arts project in the history of the Tao. It was the first time for the involved Tao representatives to commit to a production of such a dimension and complexity: for the first three performances at the Taiwan National Theatre, 30 indigenous dancers and singers, 4 elder Tao singers, 2 composers and 11 musicians acted on stage, in addition to the production team and technical staff for sound, light and stage.

The Tao, their Environment Management, and How to Learn to Sing

The Tao (達悟), also known as Yami (雅美), live on *ponso no tao*, the ‘island of human beings’ off the southeastern coast of Taiwan Island in the west Pacific. Because of its rich wild orchid vegetation, the island was named Lanyu (蘭嶼) by the Taiwanese in 1947, meaning ‘Orchid Island’. By 2015, 5044 Tao¹¹ were living on the island, distributed in six villages. Their language belongs to the Austronesian language group. Even though the surface of the island only comprises 48 square kilometres, each village has its own language dialect and traditions, formed by characteristic features of its environment.

Until today, their main food sources are farming and fishing; taros and sweet potatoes are the most common crop, and fish is the most important source of proteins. The island of Lanyu is located in an ecotone zone—a transition area between two different formations of flora and fauna—that is crossed by Wallace Line and Weber’s Line. This specific condition results in an exceptional biological diversity on the island. 889 plant species were recorded by 2004, and 54 of them were identified as endemic.¹² According to a study by Wang, Cheng and Pan¹³, the Tao use 204 species of plants as part of their traditional knowledge.

Furthermore, the ocean current *Kuroshio* (Fig. 2, also known as *Black Tide* or *Japan Current*), the extension of the *North-Equatorial Current* flowing between Luzon (Philippines) and the east coast of Japan, passes Orchid Island on its way.¹⁴ The *Kuroshio Current* influences the life of the Tao in a most remarkable way: every year between March and June, this current brings large amounts of flying fish passing by the island. The flying fish, in turn, attract various kinds of predatory fish, like tuna and

11 Information based on *Census of the Taitung County Government* in February 2015. Source: Accessed on March 10, 2016. <http://www.taitung.gov.tw/statistics/Common/HitCount.ashx?p=D088CF286338ED1CAA2DABF9F30230D85983883B2ECB268361C9582C4E1E356CD28BF2FF8020E830&type=FB01D469347C76A7&s=F32705EE62EB4DC0>.

12 Sheng-Fu Yang, 楊勝伏. 蘭嶼植物名錄訂正及外來種植物之調查 (*Investigation on revised and introduced species of Plants on Orchid Island*) (Taipei: 行政院農業委員會 Council of Agriculture Executive Yuan, 2004).

13 Hsiang-Hua Wang, Han-Wen Cheng and Fu-Chun Pan, 王相華、鄭漢文、潘富俊. 蘭嶼雅美族之植物使用方式 (*The Use of Plants by Yami on Lanyu Island*) Taipei: 國家公園學報 (Taiwan National Park Press) 10/2 (2000): 45–51.

14 B. Qiu, “Kuroshio and Oyashio Currents,” *Ocean Currents: A Derivative of the Encyclopedia of Ocean Sciences 2 Edition* ed. by Steele, Thorpe and Turekian (London: Elsevier Ltd, 2009), 61–68.

dolphinfish. Therefore, Tao people regard the flying fish as a gift from the gods. One has to be respectful while hunting, and grateful when catching them.¹⁵ The flying fish season (*rayyon*) is of great economic and ritual importance for the Tao.

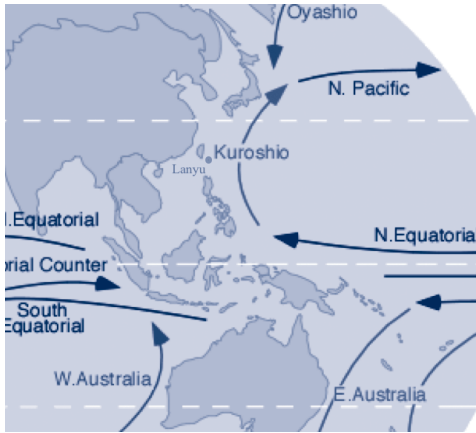


Figure 2: The flow direction of Kuroshio Current, map by Robinson Projection, Lanyu indicated by Lin Wei-Ya.

In order to understand the Tao's environment management strategy, the cultural concept *makaniaw* must be explained briefly. *Makaniaw* is essential in Tao society, defined as “all behaviours that anger the gods and lead to punishment and disaster (一切觸犯神譴，招致禍祟的行為).”¹⁶ It can be translated and understood as a system of taboos. *Makaniaw* “describes the Tao's impression of the cosmic structure – Gods, spirits and human beings have their own visible domains; it regulates the division of labour and food distribution; defines production and its season, methods and process”.¹⁷ Following these rules guarantees balance both within Tao society and in their interactions with their environment. Many social norms are therefore based on *makaniaw*. Knowledge about and consequences of the *makaniaw* system are transmitted, re-created and possibly re-constructed through traditional singing practices. But for understanding, creating and transmitting the song lyrics, also great knowledge about the different kinds of fish, plants and animals is as well required. The singing, in turn, is likewise regulated by *makaniaw*, as for example, the time, place, audience and performers of a given song genre are determined through specific taboos.

For the Austrian sound designer and electro-acoustic composer Johannes Kretz, who was involved in *Maataw*, the sound resulting from Orchid Island's biodiversity

15 Fieldnote taken during an interview with Kuo Chien-Ping, on July 13, 2013.

16 Pin-Hsiung Liu, Hui-Lin Wei, 劉斌雄 & 衛惠林. 蘭嶼雅美族的社會組織 (*The Social Structure of Yami on Lanyu Island*) (Taipei: Institute of Ethnology at Academia Sinica., 1962), 165.

17 Wei-Ya Lin, “The Relationship between the Practices of Traditional Singing and Church Hymns in the Society of the Tao”, *Multipart Music – Individuals and Educated People in Traditional Multipart Music Practices*, ed. by Pal Richter and Lujza Tari (Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities HAS, 2015), 418. Wei-Ya Lin, “The Relationship between Music and Taboos in the Society of the Tao (An Indigenous Ethnic Group of Taiwan)”, *Journal of Creative Communications* 8/1 (2013a): 47–49.

was most essential. He shared his thoughts on 20th of October 2015 during a working period for this production: “I am not interested in supporting the ‘authentic tribe performance’ like for the tourists, neither in just considering how to arrange Tao traditional songs into ‘easy-listening’ songs with western triad harmony. I want to make the audience feel the Tao’s living environment and be able to imagine its importance and beauty, even though they are sitting in a big theatre venue in the capital city. They should feel that they are on the Lanyu Island.”¹⁸ On the other hand, it was a challenge to schedule the rehearsal process in accordance with the Tao’s point of view: when and how specific songs can be taught and rehearsed is regulated by *makaniaw*. During the fieldwork period of the FASDT performers on Orchid Island, the native Tao Kuo Chien-Ping 郭健平, the main consultant for *Maataw*, and I tried to accommodate artistic necessities in native context. The performers should, for example, meet with Tao elders to learn the traditional multipart singing *mikarayag* for their performance (for *mikarayag* see Lin 2013 b¹⁹). But according to *makaniaw*, this singing can only be performed after the flying fish season, that is from June to September. As the FASDT singers could attend only in December, Kuo and I tried to convince the Tao elders to join nevertheless. But because of the taboos, only one elder singer, Lin Hsin-Chi 林新枝, appeared on 8th of December 2015 for the singing class. Of course it does not make sense to teach multipart singing with only one singer. It turned out that the next chance to schedule the lesson would be outside the island, in Hualien city, and without any elders being able to travel there. I suggested that Mr. Kuo should teach, but he declined, claiming that he was unable to sing *mikarayag*. The only solution was to transcribe the lyrics of my field recordings from 2010, and let the performers learn from listening to the recordings during the rehearsals. It was only one month before the premiere that the performers managed to sing *mikarayag* for the first time. As the time frame was too short for them to get ready, four elder Tao singers were requested to sing themselves in the first three performances at the National Theatre in Taipei. Interestingly, it was then not problematic that *mikarayag* was performed in January (that is, before the flying fish season), because the elders explained that the taboos were only compulsory on Lanyu, but not in other places. In summary, the traditional taboos, and the knowledge about songs, the ecological environment, and how these are related to the taboos, and these to places, determined how the production *Maataw* could be prepared and presented in a way that both the requirements of the Tao’s traditions as well as the prerequisites for the aesthetic quality of the production could be satisfied and justified.

Social and Ecological Change in the Society of the Tao

Since the 1950s, the Taiwanese government has been conducting policies to ‘de-velop’ and ‘modernize’ the communities of ethnic minorities in the whole country, which also—and in some cases, specifically—affected Lanyu island:

18 Notes on 20th of October 2015 during a meeting with Johannes Kretz for the production *Maataw*, my translation.

19 Wei-Ya Lin, “Mikarayag: Clapping and Singing Gatherings of the Tao; Individual Creativity within the Collective Act”, *Local and Global Understandings of Creativities: Multipart Music Making and the Construction of Ideas, Contexts and Contents*, ed. by Ardian Ahmedaja (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013 b), 232–249.

In the mid-1960s, the exotic trees on the island were considered uneconomical by the Taiwanese government. Therefore, a large number of trees were chopped down, although they had an essential function in balancing the ecosystem of the island.²⁰

In 1967, Orchid Island had to adopt the economic and monetary system of Taiwan²¹ and was opened for tourism.

In 1980, a deposit for radioactive waste was established on the island with a great deal of corruption and in close cooperation of the *Taiwan Power Company* and the government.²² They lied to the Tao people that they would build a 'fish can factory', thereby increasing employment possibilities. Of course the Tao representatives signed the contract without doubt. During the following six years, nearly 100.000 barrels of nuclear waste were deposited on Orchid Island. This radioactive waste continuously pollutes the island and its ground water, which was confirmed in 2009 by an investigation team from *Academia Sinica* Taiwan.²³ For the past 30 years, the Tao have been protesting against the deployment of radioactive waste—without any success.

If implemented, the scheduled project 'Special Area (特定區)' for Lanyu, planned since January 2013 by Taitung County (台東縣政府), would deprive the Tao from their right to make decisions about their entire living territory without prior consultation.

Discriminating policies in the past and present have been imposed on the Tao by the Taiwanese—culminating in the installation of the nuclear waste deposit on the one hand, and in severe consequences of uncontrolled tourism on the other. These policies, combined with the effects of an incompatible educational system, cause confrontations and dilemmas between traditional life and the on-going process of modernization. Today, tourism is the main source of income among the Tao, replacing fishing and farming, but the island cannot endure the 100.000–140.000 tourists per year²⁴ that invade Lanyu since 2013. Moreover, additional ecological burdens such as water pollution, overfishing, increasing traffic and lack of space for landfill are causing severe distress for the ecosystem.

The Production: Performing Social and Ecological Change

Aims and Set-up of the Performance

Maataw aims at displaying and transmitting all facets presented in the first part of this article. For example, abovementioned policies of discrimination issued by former decision-makers were audio-visually displayed and projected on the main stage. Consequently, the theatre plot not only presents the Tao's traditional social values and environment management strategies, but more than anything else focuses on the impact of recent and contemporary policies. The contrast between these aspects should be clearly

20 Hsu Huang, 黃旭. 雅美族之居住文化與變遷 (*Living Culture of the Yami and its Changes*) (Taipei: Dao Hsiang, 1995), 129–130.

21 Hsiao-Rong Guan, 關曉榮. 蘭嶼報告1987–2007 (*Lanyu Report 1987–2007*) (Taipei: Renjian, 2007), 168.

22 Michael Rudolph, *Taiwans multi-ethnische Gesellschaft und die Bewegung der Ureinwohner: Assimilation oder kulturelle Revitalisierung* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003), 103–106.

23 Source: *Our Island (the radioactive waste)* 我們的島 (談蘭嶼核廢). 2012, Taiwan Public Television Service. Accessed March 10, 2016, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GebCx1TR6Ts>.

24 Source from Tourist Bureau of Republic of China. Accessed March 10, 2016, <http://recreation.tbrc.gov.tw/asp1/statistics/year/INIT.ASP>.

presented and transmitted, so that the audience, initially unaware, gets the point and is moved, or, as Borgdorff writes, “it is important to keep in mind that the specific contribution it makes to our knowledge, understanding, insight and experience lies in the ways these issues are articulated, expressed and communicated through art”.²⁵

Maataw means ‘a floating thing’ in Tao language; it may denote a person, a piece of wood or an island. Several suggestions were made, and discussions held about this title. From a Tao point of view, *maataw* indicates the island as seen from the ocean in its floating motion. The emic metaphor *maataw* transmits the dynamic condition of the island as exposed to the ocean’s power and similarly resisting the constant threats from the outside. At the same time, the Chinese translation of the title needed to be well designed for attracting the non-indigenous majority. The Chinese translation of ‘the floating island’, fú dǎo 浮島 is pronounced exactly like the Chinese term for the Japanese city of Fukushima (fú-dǎo, 福島), with all its associations of nuclear catastrophe. Furthermore, the same pronunciation can mean ‘the island infested by nuclear radiation’ (輻島).

The title *Maataw* thus guides the structure and content of the performance: it departs from the initial symbiosis of the ocean and the island and leads to radioactive threat. The performance transforms the myths, songs, and dances of Tao people into a stage presentation. Through the theatrical inspiration, the audience is led to reflect on the culture and its central value for the Tao. Although the Tao represent ‘ocean culture’ (海洋文化; for an example see Lin, in print) in Taiwan, the performance reflects upon the contemporary condition of being human in general. It thereby questions a ‘modern’ and ‘economically efficient’ attitude towards nature, while proposing an innovative form of creativity that may integrate tradition, development and ecological sustainability.

The script for the plot in *maataw* was designed and conceptualized by the core team members named in Tab.1, and Figs. 3 and 4.

Function in the production <i>Maataw</i> / Profession	Name/ Indigenous Name
*CEO/ Anthropologist	Yang, Cheng-Hsian 楊政賢
Executive Producer/Antropologist	Chao, Chi-Fang 趙綺芳
Director/ Theatre-Director, Actor	Chen, Yan-Pin 陳彥斌/ Fangas Nayaw (Amis)
*Tao-Culture Consultant/ Fisher, Farmer	Kuo, Chien-Ping 郭健平/ Siaman Vongayen (Tao)
*Music Director, Musician/Ethnomusicologist, Musician	Lin, Wei-Ya 林維亞
*General Consultant/Documentary Maker	Lin, Chien-Hsiang 林建享
*Composer/Composer	Kretz, Johannes
Composer/Composer	Wu, Ruei-Ran 吳睿然

Table 1: The core team members of the production *Maataw – the Floating Island* 浮島 (2016). The persons marked with * have done research about, or have worked artistically with, the Tao people.

25 H. Borgdorff, “The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research”, *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, ed. by M. Biggs & H. Karlsson (London: Routledge, 2010), 57.

The plot of the play consists of a four-set dance and music performance (see Figs. 3 and 4): A traditional lullaby opens the curtain. The scene starts with the island rising out of the ocean. Tao people initiate their annual fishing cycle by conducting the ritual *mivanwa*, which means ‘calling the flying fish’. The elders warn their fellows not to break the taboos, which should be constantly kept in mind throughout the whole fishing season. When the ritual celebration is in full swing, waves of tourists flood in and interrupt daily lives and ritual events of the Tao people.

Si Cillat, a young man who just returned to his home island, witnesses the impact people and ideas from the outside bring to Lanyu. While struggling for making his own life as a modern young-generation Tao, he gradually discovers the unavoidable conflicts with and neglects from the outside majority society. He then decides to turn back and deepen his knowledge in Tao tradition with his family and friends, in order to deal with the on-going destruction that results in natural and social disasters, fed by political and economic pressure from the outside. The play ends with the song quoted at the beginning of this article (“Under the Sky Obscured by Clouds”), prolonged into a choreographed collective struggle of the Tao against pollution and discrimination.

Based on his fieldwork experience, the director of this production felt emotionally motivated to highlight the traditional social values of the Tao and elucidate their precious strategies in perpetuating the balance within their living environment. Therefore, a script based on the Tao’s traditional calendar (*Ahehep no Tao*), with related rituals and ceremonies was designed and adopted. Despite prior agreement, it was nevertheless necessary to find new compromises during the creative process. For example, the traditional order of months, and with that, of rituals and ceremonies, does not congruently fit the requirements for a staged dramaturgy curve, so the overall sequence of scenes had to be arranged accordingly. On the other hand, Tao elders insisted in truthfulness—in the sense of traditional knowledge—for specific sequences of dance movements and melodies or songs, so these had to be respected by the performers and artists involved. In this working constellation, every decision to be made required careful balance and awareness, because many details about movement and song sequences were constantly questioned and discussed.

Reactions to the Performance of Maataw – the Floating Island

Due to the dimension and the funds awarded to this production, many interviews about the production process can be found on the internet, along with individual reviews and reviews of the premiere written by professional critics or specialists in performing arts.²⁶ In the following, some of these are summarized:

26 See for example an interview with the director and the artistic director of the production: all accessed May 14, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQ-PRIQmeTI>; personal reviews on weblogs: <http://artmagazine.com.tw/ArtCritic/article1434.html> or <http://zilancho.blogspot.hu/2016/01/maataw.html>; reviews by professionals: <http://pareviews.ncafroc.org.tw/?p=19064>, <http://pareviews.ncafroc.org.tw/?p=18969>, <http://pareviews.ncafroc.org.tw/?p=18960>, <http://talks.taishinart.org.tw/juries/chm/2016030102>.

Parts	Duration	Traditional Songs/Ritual Text	Electronic Composition	Text
Interfering	15'	Lullaby	Transition: from ocean sound to lullaby song	"My dearest child, you should listen to me, I would love you to marry into rich families. During the famine, your brothers will be as lucky (as you)."
Father and Son	4'00	Ritual: calling flying fish	Day Atmosphere: waves, wind; airplane, ship, tourists, motor cycles, drone	"Flying fish on the right hand side, please swim hither, flying fish on the left hand side, please swim hither, too, swim into our vast bay! We use the holy blood of chickens, to smear it on the ancestors' waterway. I wish that many generations of my family may inherit this sea and have a long life."
Floating	5'00	Love Song (Ayani)	Night Atmosphere: waves, wind, geco calling sound	"You broke my favorite wooden digging stick. It is such a pity, because it was made from good hard wood. But my beloved man will again make a new one for me. (He loves me so much, that) even though I lost the bracelet he gave to me, he was not angry about it. Let (the relationship) break up between us!"
Intruding	1'30			
Hair Dance (Ganam)	8'00	Hair Dance Song	Day Atmosphere: motorcycles, human chatting, at the end transition to pop and techno	"(On) the vast and deep blue sea, beautiful boats are sailing. I cannot see my husband's boat. He went to catch the flying fish and dolphinfish. When he returns, our beloved children will welcome him on the beach, but I will wait in front of the house door."
Mixture	4'30	Hair Dance Song (modern version)	pop and techno beats	
"Millet Beating Dance (Mivaci)"	10'00	"Millet Beating Song & Ritual Song for House with Four Doors"	Amplifying the beats and foot stomping	"On the day of the beautiful new moon, we celebrate the rich millet harvest. We wish that all inhabitants will be healthy and may have a long life. When I was strong and young, I went to the mountains for tall trees, in order to bring resources for the four-door house. Hard work brings achievements to my life. I invite family members and friends for a meal with my goats and big pigs. I wish that our offspring may remain glorious and rich."

Fight	20'00	Love Song & Vital Dance		"I miss you, beloved, we are going to be apart. Please take care of yourself. It does not matter, we carry each other deeply within our hearts. Please do not forget me. Note: This vital dance is not a traditional dance of the Tao. The lyrics have no meaning. In the 1970s, on behalf of the Taiwanese Government, the Tao were invited to Taiwan for a dance performance. At this occasion, the vital dance was created, based on dancing styles presented by other indigenous peoples from Taiwan at the same event."
		INTERMISSION		
Flow	5'00	Love Song to the Taro-Field	Field Atmosphere: trees, birds, insects, water flowing	"Oh fields, cultivated by my own strength, please do not grow too many weeds, so that stems of good grass can climb towards the ridge. Because I still don't have a partner, who could work together with me."
God Ritual	6'00	"Sacrifice Ritual & Millet Seeding Song (Anood)"		"Gods, who protect us for generations, please take our rich sacrifice! Let all our family members be like flying swallows, may they gracefully enjoy a long life. Look at the mountain ridge with every step; our cultivated hillside looks like it had a skin with sweat stain. Strong young men tread the yellow mud. Hills have turned into yellow color. Gods, who take care of the land, please protect the beautiful planted yellow millet spikes. When the day of sacrifice comes, we will give you our rich millet harvest, during the most beautiful month."
Crazy	1'00		pop and techno beats	photographing, drone, boats bring yellow barrels (nuclear waste), drop waste on island, everything changes
Noisy	6'00	"Hand-Clapping Song (Mikarayag) about the Black Silk Cloth & Karaoke Songs in Chinese and Tao Language"	pop and techno beats, motor-cycles, human chatting	"I want to tell about my beautiful cloth, which is a skirt with jet-black silk decoration. The jet-black silk is the product of foreigners. The gorgeous skirt will make me noble and enjoy longevity."
Home	20'00	"Under the Sky Obscured by Clouds (Anood)"	Double the orchestra sound	"I heard that someone came, who wants to poison us. Yami/Tao people are so sad, nobody helped us. We are not able to resist the foreigners from Taiwan."

Table 2: The script for the dance theatre production *Maataw – the Floating Island* (2016) by *The Formosan Aboriginal Song and Dance Troupe (FASDT)*.

In interviews about the production process, the difficulty of establishing a trustful relation with the Tao people is often addressed, for example, to receive their support, or their commitments. One interview quoted the director's experience during the fieldwork: "In the beginning I introduced myself for one minute, and following this, [the Tao culture consultant] Kuo Chien-Ping blamed me for forty minutes,"²⁷ and further, "During rehearsal, almost after every set, we needed to ask the consultants if the movements would be okay, or did we break any taboos?"²⁸

The conceptualized message and its emotional expression were obviously understood by the audience, for many people felt sorry for the Tao's situation. Some broke into tears during the performance. Such emotional expressions could be observed in the venue during the performance, and many people commented on such moving experiences on personal weblogs.

Reviews by professional critics are constructive in general, albeit concerned about, or questioning, the effort behind the unusually high funding and the alleged incompetence of the young director (he was around 30 years old at the time of the premiere). One has to bear in mind that in Taiwan, cultural (and general) governance systems are treated separately for the indigenous and non-indigenous population. Hence, there is wide space for speculating about remuneration, corruption, and spending of funds based on an ethnic distinction imposed by this system. Especially since the most often transmitted 'reality' of indigenous communities is marginalization and victimization, reviewers showed concerns about the potential 'authenticity' of a production that is so well paid.

Besides of these reviews and reports that are written with artistic, scholarly, or popular backgrounds, the effect on Taiwanese politics and decision-making deserves mention. The premiere of *Maataw* at the National Theatre in Taipei immediately attracted media attention, especially in connection with the Lanyu deposit for nuclear waste. Consequently, about one month after the premiere on 22 February 2016, Legislative Yuan member Huang Kuo-Chang 黃國昌 raised a discussion in the Taiwanese Parliament about the problem of radioactive waste storage on Lanyu. Coincidentally, in May 2016, Tsai Ying-Wen 蔡英文 was elected the new president of Taiwan, and on 1st of August 2016 she formally apologized to all indigenous inhabitants of Taiwan in the name of the entire government. Two weeks later, she promised to revise the records according to the nuclear waste storage on Orchid Island and even announced that the indigenous ethnic group Tao will be the first to receive "autonomy" (whatever this means in more specific terms of self-government) in September 2016. Although it is still too early to evaluate the political impact catalysed by the theatre production and it is difficult to judge whether changing attitudes are connected to it at all, a general shift of national policies towards respecting indigenous societies can be observed with the new president Tsai Ying-Wen 蔡英文 and her cabinet.

27 My translation, original in Chinese: 我開場白介紹講了1分鐘，接下來郭大哥指著我鼻子罵了40分鐘。Source: accessed May 14, 2016, <http://blog.udn.com/jabbar66/44302621>.

28 My translation, original in Chinese: 所以排練的時候，幾乎每排一段，就要問顧問群，這樣可不可以？有沒有觸犯禁忌？Source: accessed May 14, 2016, <http://blog.udn.com/jabbar66/44302621>.

Conclusions

Because of the enforcement of discriminatory policies and a deliberate process of assimilation promoted by the former Taiwanese governments, and due to economic and social change on the island that relate to these policies, the transmission processes of the Tao's traditional knowledge are often interrupted. Among contemporary Tao, the performance of traditional knowledge through singing practices has been diagnosed as subjected to a severe threat of dying out.²⁹ It is almost impossible for older Tao people to have their cultural legacy kept alive among the younger generation. At the same time, the cultural policies of the Taiwanese government make a sharp distinction between Han-Taiwanese and indigenous peoples. Therefore, the cultural development of ethnic minorities was permanently neglected in favour of the Han majority. This situation calls for innovative ways and projects to recall and adapt traditional knowledge to contemporary needs. In this case, a music and dance performance project was developed and described that should meet these requisites.

In the beginning of this article, the *Formosan Aboriginal Song and Dance Troupe* (FASDT) and the dance theatre production *Maataw – the Floating Island* were introduced. The performance script builds on both traditional knowledge, especially the cultural concept *makaniaw* and its relevance for perpetuating sustainability in their living environment, and recent and contemporary challenges posed by social and ecological change in the society of the Tao. In artistic terms, indigenous dancing and singing practices symbolize traditional social values, while western contemporary dance represents the imposition of values foreign to traditional Tao. Even though the impact of this production cannot yet be fully evaluated, some discussions in the arena of cultural policies for indigenous peoples have been already raised. Most importantly, the problem of radioactive waste stored on the island was echoed in the media and thus received attention among decision-makers. Therefore, considering the questions posed by Klisala Harrison, “does an application [of ethnomusicology] support, change, or contest what certain social groups (and which ones?) consider good and valued? What are the implications and politics of the applications’ value content?”,³⁰ despite the still premature quality of evaluation, one may definitely nail down the main impact of this specific artistic application as having pierced what the Taiwanese majority’s educated class—the audience of the National Theatre—considers “good and valued”. That is, many people of the upper middle class, previously unaware, had to face the dire fate of the Tao, and with them some media and policy-makers. The official tone of Taiwanese media and today’s politics is egalitarian and anti-discriminatory (“good and valued”), and the performance put this into question.

Being involved in the theatre production as music director does not only mean that I had the duty to develop an attractive musical concept for motivating the Tao

29 A tool for measuring the level of threat for musical genres called *Music Vitality and Endangerment Framework* was developed during the research project *Music Vitality and Endangerment* conducted by Catherine Grant and financed by the School of Creative Arts, University of Newcastle, Australia. Source: accessed on March 10, 2016, www.musicendangerment.com.

30 Harrison Klisala. “Evaluating Values in Applied Ethnomusicology,” *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*, ed. by Svanibor Pettan and Jeff Tilton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 106.

and other-than-Tao potential audience. Furthermore, as an ethnomusicologist experienced in working with Tao, I had to bridge cultural gaps between the Tao team members and those of other providence. And not to forget that Taiwanese and Austrian musicians and composers required somebody to coordinate and communicate. Finally, the conflicts and misunderstandings that appeared regularly needed to be mediated. With all that, in the course of this production I learned to actually experience the prejudices and power relations between the Tao and the majority, and I deeply felt the severe injury that Tao have to bear since they were exposed to the consequences of nuclear waste. This experience clearly gave me a more precise picture of the paradoxical situation.

Consequently, the artists involved in this applied project transformed the problems concerning the Tao people into something “personal—known, loved, feared, or whatever, but not neutral”,³¹ something that empowered the Tao’s voice and made this voice heard and comprehended in the broader public as well as by some decision-makers. Hopefully, the island’s ecological burden will seriously be taken into account in the near future. Only if the deposit for radioactive waste will be moved out from their home island, and the problems caused by massive tourism can find a satisfactory solution for all sides, the Tao will be able to independently work on transforming their own ways of life for a sustainable future.

Bibliography

- Biggs, M. and H. Karlsson, eds.. *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Borgdorff, H.. “The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research. In *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, edited by M. Biggs & H. Karlsson. London: Routledge, 2010, 44–63.
- Evernden, N. “Beyond Ecology: Self, Place and the Pathetic Fallacy”. In *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by C. Glotfelty & H. Fromm. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996, 92–104.
- Guan, Hsiao-Rong 關曉榮. 蘭嶼報告 1987–2007 (*Lanyu Report 1987-2007*). Taipei: Ren-jian, 2007.
- Harrison, Klisala. “Evaluating Values in Applied Ethnomusicology”. In *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology* edited by Svanibor Pettan and Jeff Titon. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015, 93–108.
- Hsie, Shih-Chung 謝世忠. 族群人類學的宏觀探索：臺灣原住民論集 (*Discovery about the Ethnical Anthropology: Study-Collection about Taiwanese Indigenous Peoples*). Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2004.
- Huang, Hsu 黃旭. 雅美族之居住文化與變遷 (*Living Culture of the Yami and its Changes*). Taipei: Dao Hsiang, 1995.

31 N. Evernden, “Beyond Ecology: Self, Place and the Pathetic Fallacy,” *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. by C. Glotfelty & H. Fromm (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 100.

- Lin, Wei-Ya. "The Relationship between Music and Taboos in the Society of the Tao (An Indigenous Ethnic Group of Taiwan)." *Journal of Creative Communications* 8/1 (2013a): 45–64.
- Lin, Wei-Ya. "Mikarayag: Clapping and Singing Gatherings of the Tao; Individual Creativity within the Collective Act." In *Local and Global Understandings of Creativities: Multipart Music Making and the Construction of Ideas, Contexts and Contents*, edited by Ardian Ahmedaja. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013 b, 232–249.
- Lin, Wei-Ya. "The Relationship between the Practices of Traditional Singing and Church Hymns in the Society of the Tao." In *Multipart Music– Individuals and Educated People in Traditional Multipart Music Practices*, edited by Pal Richter and Lujza Tari. Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities HAS, 2015, 416–434.
- Lin, Wei-Ya (in print). "Social Inclusion through Music Making- Theories in Practice in the Case of the Tao". Edited by Ursula Hemetek, Inna Naroditskaya, Yoshitaka Terada. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology.
- Liu, Pin-Hsiung and Wei, Hui-Lin 劉斌雄 & 衛惠林. 蘭嶼雅美族的社會組織 (*The Social Structure of Yami on Lanyu Island*). Taipei: Institute of Ethnology at Academia Sinica., 1962.
- Lu, Yu-Hsiu 呂鈺秀. 臺灣音樂史 (*Taiwan Music History*). Taipei: Wu-Nan, 2004.
- Pettan, Svanibor. "Applied Ethnomusicology and Empowerment Strategies: Views from across the Atlantic." *Muzikološki Zbornik* 44/1 (2008): 85–100.
- Pettan, Svanibor and Jeff T. Titon, eds.. *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Qiu, B. "Kuroshio and Oyashio Currents." In *Ocean Currents: A Derivative of the Encyclopedia of Ocean Sciences 2 Edition* edited by Steele, Thorpe and Turekian. London: Elsevier Ltd, 2009, 61–72.
- Rudolph, Michael. *Taiwans multi-ethnische Gesellschaft und die Bewegung der Ureinwohner: Assimilation oder kulturelle Revitalisierung*. Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003.
- Sun, Ta-Chuan 孫大川. 台灣原住民族漢語文學選集：評論卷 (*Anthology of Chinese Literature by Taiwan Aboriginal: Volume of Comments*). Taipei: Ink publisher, 2003.
- Tan, Ya-Ting 譚雅婷. 台灣原住民樂舞與文化展演的探討—以「原舞者」為例 (*A deep probe into the aboriginal songs and dances in Taiwan as well as its cultural performances—The Formosa Aboriginal Song and Dance Troupe*). Taipei: Master thesis at Department of Musicology at Taiwan Normal University, 2004.
- Wang, Hsiang-Hua, Cheng, Han-Wen, and Pan, Fu-Chun 王相華、鄭漢文、潘富俊. 蘭嶼雅美族之植物使用方式 (*The Use of Plants by Yami on Lanyu Island*). Taipei: 國家公園學報 (Taiwan National Park Press) 10/2 (2000): 45–51.
- Yang, Sheng-Fu 楊勝伏. 蘭嶼植物名錄訂正及外來種植物之調查 (*Investigation on revised and introduced species of Plants on Orchid Island*). Taipei: 行政院農業委員會 Council of Agriculture Executive Yuan, 2004.

POVZETEK

Ljudstvo Tao (達悟), znano tudi kot Yami (雅美), živi na Otoku orhidej (Lanyu 蘭嶼) jugovzhodno od glavnega otoka in je eno izmed šestnajstih uradno priznanih staroselskih ljudstev Tajvana. Tradicijska glasba ljudstva Tao temelji na pesemskem izročilu. S pomočjo petja prenašajo svojo zgodovino, poglede na življenje in opevajo tabuje. Pesmi neposredno odražajo raznovrstne povezave z ekosistemom, ki jih obdaja. Od 1950-ih so vlade poskušale z različnimi dekreti »razviti« in »modernizirati« etnične manjšinske skupine na Tajvanu. Ljudstvo Tao je posledično opustilo posamezne tradicijske prakse. Leta 1980 je bilo na otoku zgrajeno »začasno odlagališče« »šibko« radioaktivnih odpadkov, radioaktivne substance pa so našli tudi izven odlagališča. Začetek članka je posvečen formoškemu staroselskemu petju in plesu ter ansamblu FASDT in ples-

nemu gledališkemu projektu *Maataw* – plavajoči otok. Scenarij predstave temelji tako na tradicijskem znanju – zlasti na kulturnem konceptu *makaniaw* in njegovem pomenu trajne vzdržnosti ljudstva v okolju – kot tudi na nedavnih in sodobnih izzivih, ki jih pred ljudstvo Tao prinašajo socialne in ekološke spremembe. Po uvodnih razlagah o ljudstvu in njegovem okolju, se članek posveti obravnavi konfliktov in težav, ki so se pojavili med realizacijo projekta *Maataw*. Kakšne težave se pojavijo pri realizaciji tovrstnega angažiranega projekta in katere strategije so bile implementirane? Kako prikazuje *Maataw* ekološke in politične težave ljudstva Tao na odru? Kako so bila razmerja moči med ljudstvom Tao in večinskim prebivalstvom obravnavana po predstavi? Članek nenazadnje odpira vprašanje, kaj koristnega se lahko naučimo iz te vzorčne študije zavoljo splošnejšega pogleda na projekte, ki se posvečajo ekološkim problemom?