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OMENGEREDAKL: AESTHETICS OF SOUND AND VOCAL MUSIC IN PALAU

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Omengeredakl are group chants sung on the islands of Palau, West Micronesia. They stand out from the rest of the repertoire of Palauan vocal music because of certain musical features not found in other extant Palauan songs. The distinctly Palauan sound of this song type, and how this "audible locality" is manifested in song, has at times been used extensively in the localization of Self, and at times less so. The article argues that this has led to changes in the popularity of omengeredakl over the course of the last century.

AS IN MUCH OF MICRONESIA, the performing arts in Palau are not so much about creating a new composition or dance as they are about the act of performing and the resultant performance. Here, song and dance are first and foremost an affirmation of cultural roots, an affirmation disguised in (vocal) sound and body movement. By no means does this make the actual song and dance secondary; on the contrary, it fills both chant and choreography with a sense of cultural belonging that adds an aura of grandeur to every presentation of traditional performing arts.

Palau is the westernmost island group in Micronesia. About 500 miles southeast from the Philippine coast, the island group stretches about 370 miles from north to south covering an area that has a total land mass of 177 square miles and is currently home to a population of 21,000. When the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands evolved into the political landscape we know today, Palau opted not to join the Federated States of Micronesia and opted to become politically independent instead. This

political status was eventually achieved in 1994, closing the chapter on nearly a century of Spanish, German, Japanese, and American political control. Today, Palau's musical lore bears the remnants of the island nation's colonial history.[1] Some musical genres have completely fallen out of the repertoire; others have undergone significant transition. Still others have retained much of what seems to have been their musical essence prior to the colonial period. Such musical change is but one facet of an overall cultural shift. But when music changes, there is more at stake than the expression of the shifting images of individual and group identities; when music changes, the aesthetics of sound are in transition as well. This is not a straightforward process that momentarily affects the whole array of musical expression in a given culture; rather, transition in music tends to yield timely, tangible effects. This is why at any given point in time, some musical genres have persisted while others have not, and some song types have altered their musical language (instead of dying out) while others (perceivably) have remained stable.

Looking at musical phenomena through the lens of the cultural dynamics that have brought them about is vital for understanding the meaning(s) that sound carries. But looking back at precisely these cultural dynamics through the lens of musical aesthetics is equally necessary to grasp the complexities of the process by which music both expresses and reinforces cultural transition.

Frequency band singing is one aspect of Palauan musical aesthetics that has fundamentally shaped the Palauan understanding of the musical beauty of group singing, especially in the genre called *omengeredakl*.[2] Omengeredakl are still part of the contemporary Palauan vocal music repertoire today, but they have been losing popularity since the second half of the twentieth century. Interestingly, however, there have been attempts to revive this genre in recent years; this is a singular phenomenon in Palau. To understand this revival's nature and background, it is necessary to situate omengeredakl within the context of the Palauan culture as well as to analyze its musical features in some detail. This way, one is able to gain insights into the question of why omengeredakl have fluctuated in popularity during the last century.[3]

Omengeredakl, *Bóid*

The group chant omengeredakl is performed by a chorus with, ideally, two soloists and consists of a flexible sequence of four basically standardized structural units as well as an interpolated, spoken or recited passage. One of these four units is delivered by the entire chorus, and it is in this section that a frequency band is established by the singers. In music, a frequency band is a specific range of pitches in close vicinity sounding at the same time.

The development of such a sound band is brought about by the individual pitches changing, thus resulting in pitch variation within the upper and lower frequency limit of the sound band. Simply put, while a melody is a succession of pitches in time, a frequency band is the development of a pitch cluster in time. The frequency band lends form to this musical unit of omengeredakl; the changing upper and lower limits of this frequency band are such that the band is narrowed down at phrasal ends and in this way functions as a central marker of the musical structure.

Omengeredakl, as a word, implies that something is sung in a loud voice. Etymologically it is related to the nouns *kerredakl, keredekiil,* and *kerrekord.*[4] In a musical context, omengeredakl means "to begin a song."[5] The word *bóid,* on the other hand, often used interchangeably with omengeredakl in Palauan colloquial language, is related to the verb *omoid,* which means to "travel between places."[6] However, as a musical term, bóid refers to a specific genre dealing with travel-related content that is most often sung in the omengeredakl idiom. Thus, omengeredakl denotes a musical form, whereas bóid is a specific textual content. In this article, I shall therefore use the term bóid when referring only to textual content, and omengeredakl in other contexts.

Augustin Krämer, an anthropologist of the early twentieth century, observed in 1909 that bóid is a "song that is usually performed by three men, sung softly, and then picked up by the crowd."[7] Some bóid can indeed also be performed by an individual instead of a group (a group, in this context, means more than three persons). When performed by a single individual, however, the text is recited rather than sung, which, according to the Palauan conception, brings the musical item into an entirely different musical genre; it is no longer omengeredakl, but a solo chant.[8]

Traveling has a far-reaching, complex meaning in the Pacific. The word bóid not only relates to the physical movement of people in space, but also extends to anything that "takes you traveling around with this song"[9]—anything that makes the listener's imagination wander. Traveling in Palau inevitably means interacting with other communities, whether they are groups or individuals, and therefore, bóid implicitly or explicitly deal with the relationships between villages, clubs, and other communities.[10] As such, bóid "can be praising as well as teasing" of another person[11]; in either case, they directly address the opposite group or individual. Japanese anthropologist Hijikata, who did his research in Palau in the early 1940s, illustrates the metaphorical meaning of the word bóid: "If a man committed adultery, and people knew about it, someone would bring this hearsay to the *cheldebechel* (club), and a song would be composed about it. Everyone then sings this song and dances all over the village."[12] Here, it is the hearsay of adultery that is "traveling." In keeping with such an open interpretation, bóid is also described as a "popular rumor-song."[13]

Omengeredakl are still considered a decisive part of Palauan lore today, even though they are mainly within the cultural knowledge of the elder generation. Community elders even make efforts to revitalize omengeredakl singing by deliberately putting it on the programs of local cultural fairs because, according to them, omengeredakl have been underrepresented on such occasions in recent decades. Their popularity has declined indeed.[14] Unlike most other genres of evolved Palauan traditional music,[15] however, new bóid were composed until at least the 1950s. One of the most popular bóids in today's Palau was composed as late as the end of World War II by people from the southern island of Peleliou who had been transferred to the more northern Airai State. When they returned to their island, they offered this bóid as a token of gratitude to the people of Airai, whom they thanked for their support and hospitality.[16] This story illustrates that until the end of World War II, the genre was not only an active part of culturally prescribed behavior, but had also maintained its function within the social fabric of Palauan society.

Krämer calls bóid/omengeredakl "dance songs," a term that might place too much emphasis on the dance component: "During the dance song bóid everybody gets up, merely in order to clap their hands on their thighs."[17] As far as performance is concerned, historical descriptions and contemporary performances are in accord: one performer, also acting as a prompter (see musical analysis below) who inserts spoken phrases between the remaining parts of an omengeredakl, usually claps his hands at prescribed points, and underlines the lyrics by means of gestures and dance movements. Other singers may join in by clapping their hands. While gestures may play a role, body movement seems to be optional today. As one of my Palauan interlocutors described it: "[omengeredakl] are sung by a group: the leader explains the verses, and one person 'deviates' from the group, keeping the rhythm. The leader starts the chant; the 'paddlers' continue the chant—this is the crowd, at least four people—and then there is the person who departs from the main melody."[18] So distinct functions exist within the group that delivers the omengeredakl. In Palauan terminology, the *melemotem* prompts or "explains" the song texts in between the formal units of the omengeredakl; the *meruchodl* is the singer who, as a soloist, begins the sung section of an omengeredakl; the *esbe* is a "counterpart" singer (the "one person who departs from the main melody")[19]; the *melikes* is the chorus leader; and the *rokui* is the chorus itself. Melemotem, meruchodl, esbe, and melikes are referred to as the *lebuchel*, the "leaders."[20]

The melemotem primarily serves to call the lyrics to everybody's mind. To do so, the melemotem recites the upcoming text lines in full length in between the formal units; the line is then taken up by the chorus (there

may be slight temporal overlapping between recited and sung text). The melemotem is then followed by the meruchodl, who starts the sung part of the omengeredakl by singing the respective stanza's first line.

Melikes means "to speak (i.e., words of song which others will sing in response)."[21] This word actually is part of canoeing vocabulary; its narrow meaning is "to pole (a canoe)." This metaphor neatly depicts the melikes' function: to guide the "crew" or chorus through the "water" of the musical fabric.

The word esbe, related to Palauan *mengesb*, describes the lunar constellation during which the moon stands right in the center of the sky. This word is applied to the solo part of omengeredakl because its "sound is almost like the moon up there,"[22] a phrasing that nicely mirrors the Palauan notion of tonal space. Interestingly, the term also means "to sing out of tune,"[23] which, in Palauan does not carry the negative connotation that this expression has in English, as it is the kind of "out of tune" that allows for the establishment of the genre's core characteristic, the frequency band. Based on the term's distinct musical significance, another lexical meaning of the word esbe is "to sing 'with an especially high-pitched voice' as the only person in the group."[24] The esbe is an important part of omengeredakl singing: it significantly shapes the musical form, as I will show shortly. Even if the esbe function is not delivered, however, the piece is still distinguishable to the Palauan listener as omengeredakl.[25]

(El) Rokui, finally, simply means "all of them,"[26] and in the context of omengeredakl, the chorus. The choristers usually join in *un à un:* there is no clear-cut "chorus entry" that would further underline the demarcation of the formal units. This leads to a gradual build-up of a frequency band rather than to its instantaneous emergence.[27]

Musical Form

Omengeredakl consist of a flexible sequence of four roughly standardized structural units plus the interpolated, spoken, or recited melemotem passages. The melodic progression of the four units (A, B, C, D) generally follows a scheme that is roughly uniform throughout one piece but that may differ to some degree among different performances. In any case, the contours of the phrases maintain their recognizability across different performances. One omengeredakl recording will be analyzed in some detail below in order to illustrate the musical nature of this genre.

Figure 1 is a transcription of an omengeredakl that was recorded in 2005.[28] It was sung by three elderly women, the lowest possible number of singers in an omengeredakl. This partly accounts for the fact that in this recording

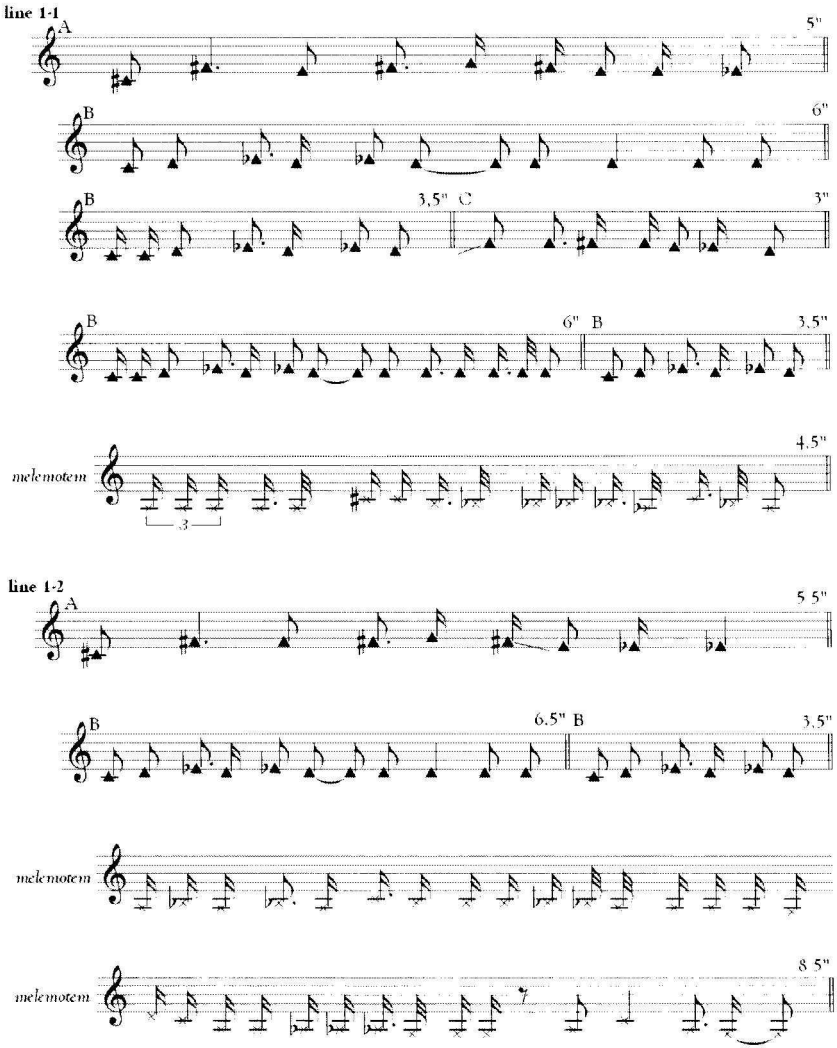

FIGURE 1. **Transcription of an omengeredakl recorded in 2005 (Abels 2008, 54). Ibau Demei Oiterong, Ilong Rubasch Isaol, Magdalena Demek Towai, singers.**

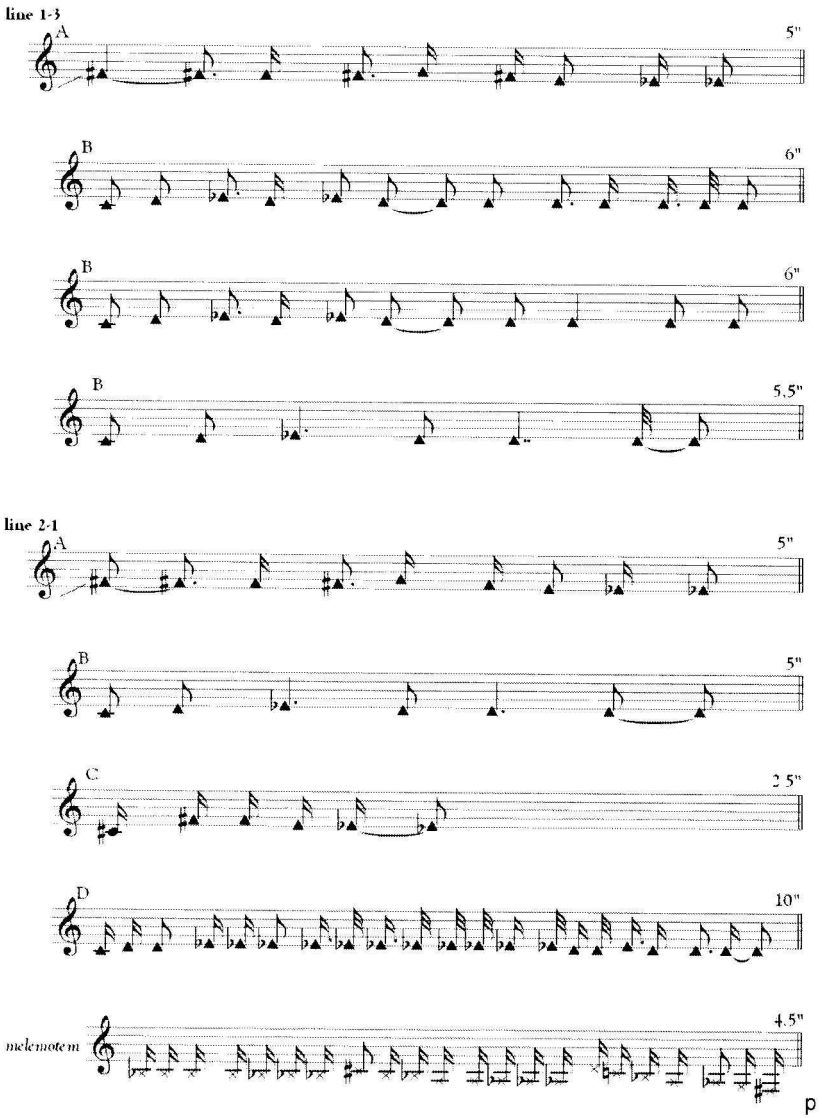

FIGURE 1. **Continued**

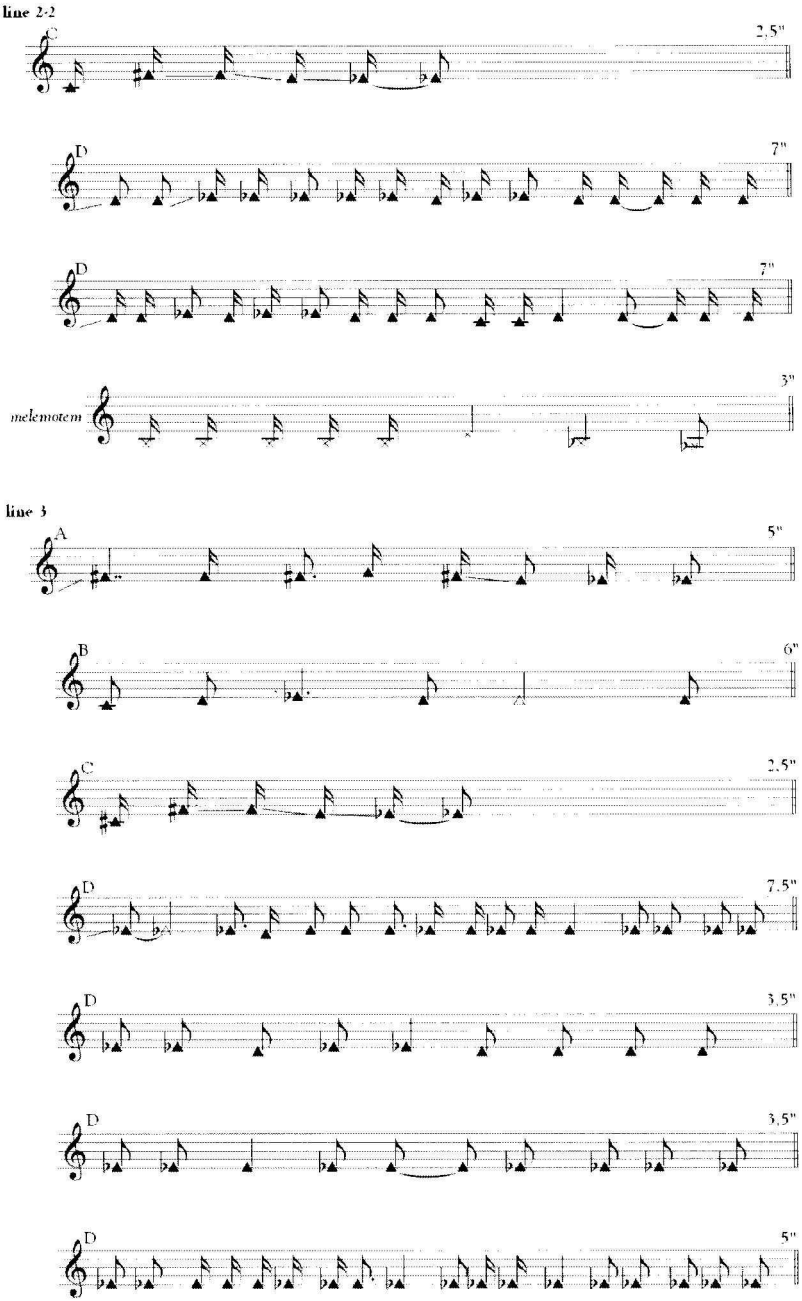

FIGURE 1. **Continued**

the role of the esbe is nearly absent; another arguably more decisive reason for eliminating the esbe is the growing unfamiliarity with the omengeredakl repertory in contemporary Palau, which might have instilled a feeling of insecurity about musical and/or textual details even among these singers, who are widely considered specialists in bóid repertory. With the vanishing of performance spaces, even specialists' knowledge is diminishing.

This omengeredakl has the following structure:

(line 1-1) A B B C B B
[melemotem: spoken intersection]
(line 1-2) A B B
[melemotem: spoken intersection]
(line 1-3) A B B B
(line 2-1) A B C D
[melemotem: spoken intersection]
(line 2-2) C D D
[melemotem: spoken intersection]
(line 2-3) A B C D D D D

All phrases of this bipartite piece form rhythmically closed units, and they are separated by a short break. The rhythmic pulse accelerates and decelerates permanently in the course of the piece to an extent that cannot be captured in staff notation. Melodically, this omengeredakl displays general characteristics of the Palauan musical language such as the undulating melodic structure typical of pitch progression in Palauan music in phrases A, B, and D and the descending *melos*, which is approached from below at the outset in phrase C.

Phrase D is the core element of the final formula of omengeredakl. This function accounts for its nonsyncopic, beat-oriented rhythmic structure, which stands in contrast to the rhythmic designs of phrases A and B. Giving room to increased vocal accentuation and rhythmic acceleration, it allows for the piece's tension to culminate toward the end. A decisive means of achieving this climax is the *stretta* architecture of the inner tempo, which for the last four D phrases of the music shown in Figure 1 amounts to 128, 154, 154, and 308 (i.e., the inner tempo of the fourth D phrase is double that of the second and third D phrases).

The spectrum of the inner tempo for this musical example is shown in Table 1.

Phrases A and C are relatively stable in the absolute temporal design when compared with the durational compass of phrases B and D. Owing to fluctuations in tempo, their minimum and maximum inner tempos are in both cases 24 beats per minute apart, which equals 0.4 beats per second.

TABLE 1. **Inner tempo of the 2005 omengeredakl.***

Formal Unit	Spectrum of Absolute Duration	Spectrum of Inner Tempo
Phrase A	4.5–5	96–120
Phrase B	3–6.5	60–140
Phrase C	2.5	120–144
Phrase D	3.5–10	120–154; concluding phrase D: 308
Melemotem section	3–8.5	160–280

* Accuracy of measurement is 0.5 seconds.

With the exception of the penultimate line, which is the opening unit of the final movement, all lines commence with phrase A followed by phrase B. In general, AB is a typical line opening in omengeredakl, but it is not necessarily used as continuously as it is in this instance. Another characteristic feature of omengeredakl evident in this example is the tendency to use unit D where unit B was used in the earlier stanzas of a song; this usually occurs in the second half. All items in the corpus finish on D, and the stretta repetition of D at the end is also characteristic of the genre. These characteristics are all handled flexibly; e.g., B does surface in the concluding lines, and first halves do contain D in places, even if the majority of performances show a different structure.

The aspect distinguishing omengeredakl from all other genres in Palauan music is the rendition of the chorus' part in a heterophonic way that can only remotely be captured in conventional staff notation: this is the frequency band. It makes use of the specific possibilities inherent in group singing. While the actual melody as notated in the examples serves as a point of reference to all choristers, usually only one singer actually follows it. The remaining vocalists, with the exception of the esbe, literally fill out the vertical tonal space surrounding this melodic point of reference within a roughly defined scope. By producing pitches within the immediate vicinity of the main melody's pitch they establish the frequency band, which yields the characteristic sound effect of omengeredakl.

The esbe (not featured in the example shown in Fig. 1), entering either roughly on beat with the chorus or with a slight time displacement, then proceeds to add another vocal part to the thick musical texture, which usually commences on a pitch spectrum above that employed by the chorus. In the following example, the esbe melody slowly descends in pitch toward the phrasal ends, while the chorus remains around the established frequency band. Within a phrase, therefore, the esbe and chorus parts slowly converge.

As the esbe part draws nearer in pitch to the chorus in the course of the musical phrase, it adds to the frequency band's narrowing upper contours.

Usually, two descending melodic esbe phrases occur per formal unit. In this regard, the esbe part may be viewed as a quasidiminution of the chorus' unit that occurs solely on the level of musical form and does not affect the (inner) tempo. The end of the first esbe phrase is an interior phrase conclusion. The final movement of the phrase differs from this interior phrase conclusion in that the chorus also narrows the frequency band, in addition to the esbe approaching its part in pitch. An interior phrase conclusion in omengeredakl is therefore signified by converging contours of the frequency band and the concurrently maintained tonal friction generated by a frequency band stable in contours. However, in the final formula, the frequency band is narrowed down to a width that is perceived by the listener as a distinct (and consonant) pitch and no longer as a dense frequency band.

This way, the development of tonal friction is used as a marker of musical form, since it defines the shape of those musical phrases in which the chorus takes part. Figures 2–4 illustrate this by showing the development of spectral density in the course of single chorus phrases in an omengeredakl recorded in 1963.[29]

Clearly, the musical development focuses on the vertical dimension of sound. All three diagrams show the final narrowing of the frequency band, which by establishing a small plateau of narrow frequency range at the phrasal end brings the phrase to its conclusion.

Figures 5–7 show a visual of the same parameter with respect to another recording prepared in 2005.[30]

Representative of the other items in the corpus, the figures show that this musical characteristic is a constant in diachronical comparisons of omengeredakl singing. Unlike recording 1, there is an esbe singer in the second recording. Her part is notated in small staff. Some additional general characteristics of esbe parts that are illustrative of omengeredakl can be pointed out in this example:

1. The esbe part may fall below the chorus' melodic line.
2. While in omengeredakl, there tends to be no descending melos in the chorus' melodic lines, the esbe phrases proceed in a descending course. Given the vertical orientation of sound development as described earlier, the overall sonic impression is therefore that of a descending melos in spite of the chorus part's nondescending melodic contours.
3. In all other genres of Palauan vocal music, one descending melodic line normally matches one formal unit. In omengeredakl, on the other hand, a two-phrased esbe part matches one chorus phrase. This is

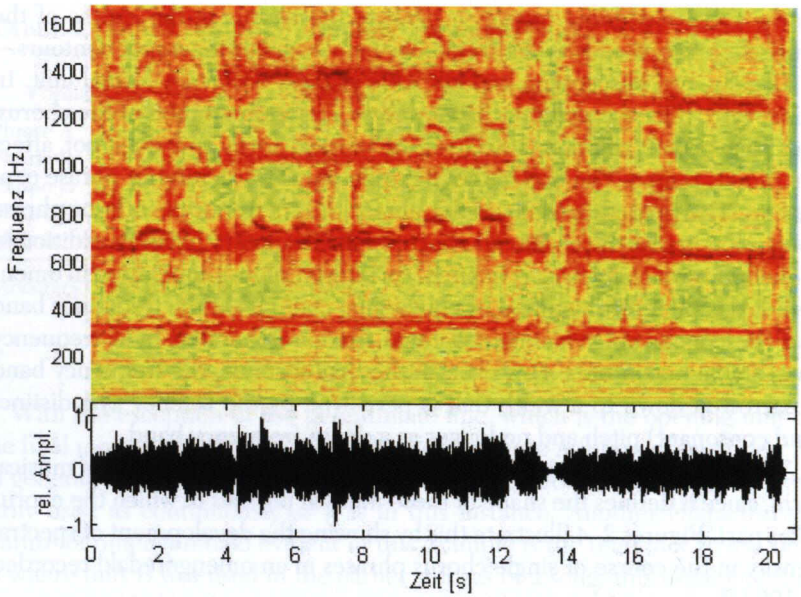

FIGURE 2. **Spectrogram of phrase 8 of recording Smith I-2. Frequenz indicates frequency; rel. Ampl., relative amplitude; Zeit, time.**

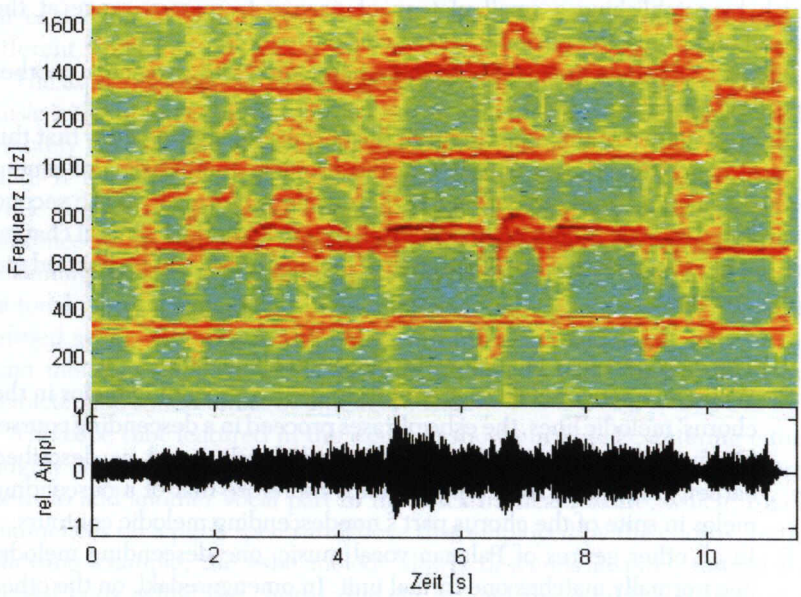

FIGURE 3. **Spectrogram of phrase 9 of recording Smith I-2.**

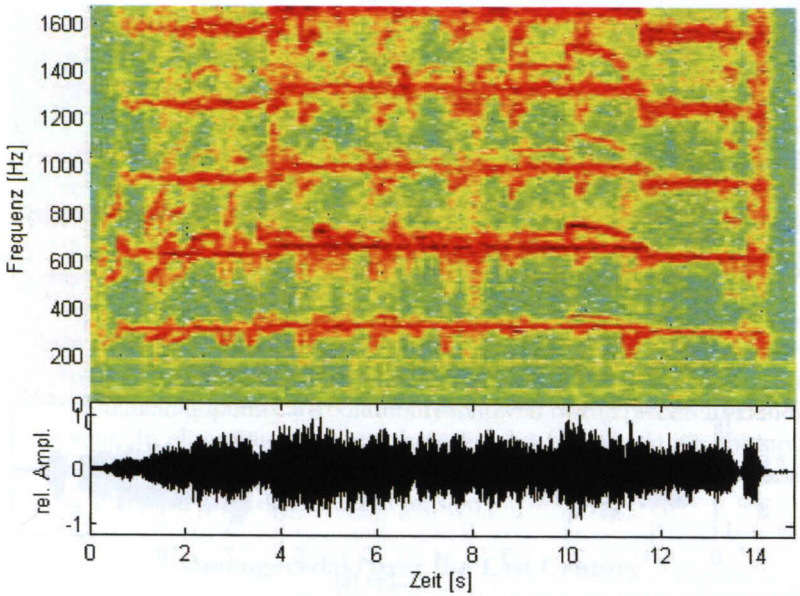

FIGURE 4. **Spectrogram of phrase 17 of recording Smith I-2.**

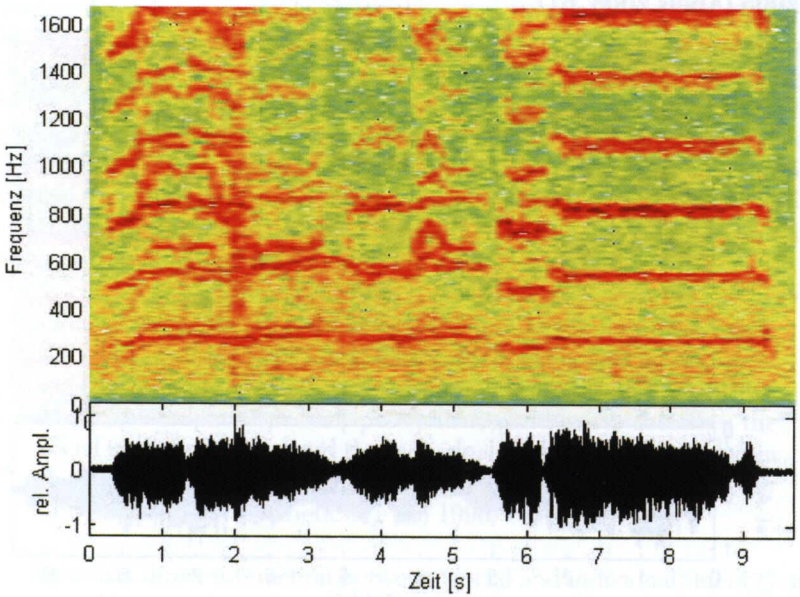

FIGURE 5. **Spectrogram of phrase 2 of a keredekiil recorded in 2005 (Abels 2008, 61).**

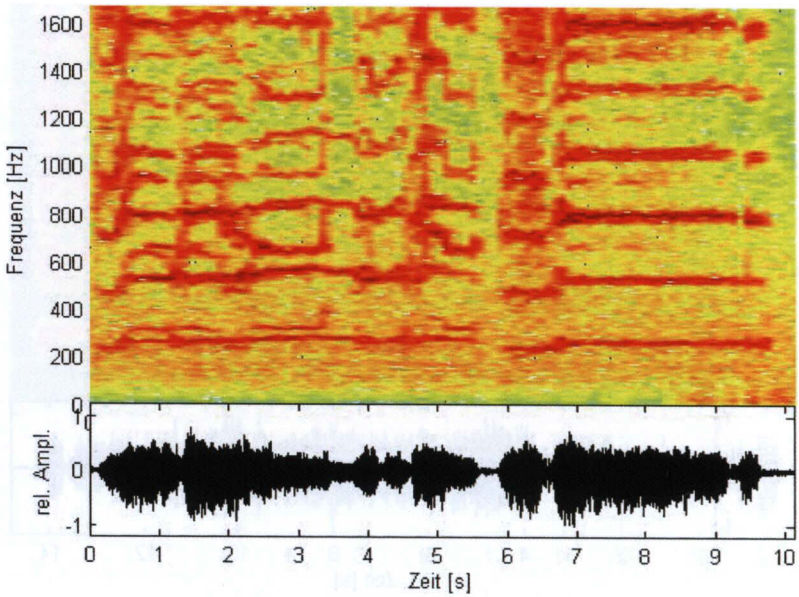

FIGURE 6. **Spectrogram of phrase 4 of a keredekiil recorded in 2005 (Abels 2008, 61).**

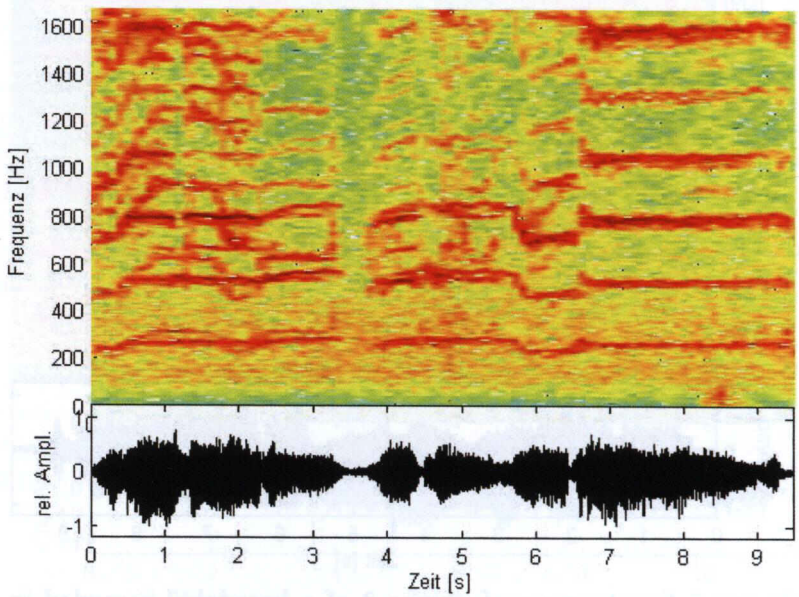

FIGURE 7. **Spectrogram of phrase 6 of an omengeredakl recorded in 2005 (Abels 2008, 61).**

possible because the final musical development mainly focuses on the development of the frequency band, i.e., that of tonal friction, instead of punctual melodic evolution. This shows that in Palauan singing, a marker of musical form in one genre, such as descending melos, can be assigned different functions in a different context where the respective original function is fulfilled by another musical parameter.

4. During the course of the exploration of tonal space, intervals larger than a major second usually appear in the context of musical densification only, i.e., when a piece is leading to a dramatic climax. In omengeredakl, an acceleration of a rhythmic pulse also serves this end. In such a context, pitch distances between esbe and the chorus' frequency band's reference pitch as large as a fourth may occur. Such dramatic highpoints are commonly followed by the piece's final movement. In climaxing passages, the esbe also tends to stress the upper tonal center much more than in the rest of the piece, which also serves as a means to increase musical tension.

Omengeredakl over the Last Century

Over the course of the last century, omengeredakl singing's musical characteristics have been maintained. At the same time, the genre's popularity during the same time period has experienced remarkable ups and downs. Other genres of Palauan music have declined in popularity, or changed on the level of musical form and content, and the somewhat wavy history of omengeredakl's popularity over time is a singular phenomenon in Palau. Evidently, it is connected with ongoing identity construction in and through musical transformation and stability in Palau over this time period.

Music is performance in flux; at the same time, it is a site for the sounding, yet unobtrusive, negotiation of Self. Put a different way,

> identity is *mobile*, a process not a thing, a becoming not a being; [. . .] our experience of music—of music making and music listening—is best understood as an experience of this *self-in-process*. Music, like identity, is both performance and story, describes the social in the individual and the individual in the social, the mind in the body and the body in the mind; identity, like music, is a matter of both ethics and aesthetics. (Frith 1996, 109)

There is a direct interaction between (social and individual) identity and music-making practices. Because of the necessarily dynamic nature of the former, the latter can be looked upon as one expression among several of the discursive status quo, a snapshot of a perpetual development. Music "isn't a

way of expressing ideas; it is a way of living them" (Frith 1996, 111). As such, it is inextricably linked with several conceptual categories and parameters of the individual's way of thinking, all of which relate to the imagination of Self in its diachronical and spatial environment. This linkage, in turn, bonds the individual as well as the community with the sonic item, and different musical modes of expressing ideas produce different statements of musical identity.

Some of the various constructions of identity that find expression in Palauan music exclude and repudiate the Other by musically incorporating it. At the same time, they tend to maintain a very local essence on those levels that have always been of primal importance to the Palauan concept of the performing arts: function and message. The solo chant *chesols* provides an example for this.[31] Omengeredakl, on the other hand, have displayed stability in musical form and content; the frequency band is a constant in both historical and contemporary omengeredakl performances. This is in spite of its clear incompatibility with both the Japanese and the Euro-American musical languages, which have been important musical idioms for the most significant musical transformations in Palau since World War I, including the afore-mentioned example of chesols. Other song types in Palau have adjusted to suit changing tastes over time; omengeredakl, however, have not. Instead, they have been declining in popularity since around World War I, but they never completely dropped out of the Palauan repertoire as other genres have, including the only other known genre that made use of sound band singing, the funeral chant *kelloi cheldolm*. From the mid-1990s onward, conscious efforts have been made to preserve this musical genre. One must ask why.

Frequency band singing requires a specific sense of the vertical space in music, a sense that is innate to Palauan (evolved) traditional music. It is a performative technique requiring a Palauan conception of the organization of tonal material and yields a distinctly Palauan sonic effect. A Palauan artisan described the essence of the Palauan arts by saying that the "Palauan artist or craftsman expresses his esthetics—and his viewers recognize it—in the excellence of his craftsmanship [. . .]."[32] This perspective can be seen in the performing arts in the emphasis placed on the performative beauty of frequency band singing. In displaying his performance skills, the Palauan chanter aims to demonstrate "the excellence of his craftsmanship," which complements his knowledge of the chant's words and its proper context. Add to this the functional component of chants, and musical aesthetics can be said to legitimize the chanter as well as his definition of what is "proper" in the given context. In this subtle way, his "craftsmanship" becomes inseparable from the context and purpose of the chant—from the significance of a statement disguised by singing in a given situation.

I argue that chants, including omengeredakl, have become a resource for the expression of various agendas, and "a sometimes potent ideological weapon in contemporary political action aimed at furthering sectional interests."[33] The seeming contradiction in Pacific constructions of identity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is the focus on continuity with yesterday's (imagined) lifeworlds while identities are reconstituted in order to retie the Self within rapidly changing circumstances. Chants could become, in other words, a resource in the articulation of identifications in the present and the future because they sound undeniably local. Sounding local, however, was regarded as important in varying degrees in the course of the last century. In contemporary Palau, the sound of chant is the evocation of age-old knowledge; the act of chanting is the implementation of rightful authority (Abels 2008; Yamaguchi 1967). The construction and consolidation of power structures, as well as the individual's place within them, has always been the main purpose of chants, including omengeredakl, and therefore they are very much capable of localizing Self by communicating a sense of predisposed continuity and a cultural raison d'être.

The local is not a hotly contested space in Palau, but the localization of Self, by its very nature, is. More than any other realm of culture, music, and especially chanting in Palau, provides the space to assert its role in global society. Even though the musical specifics of omengeredakl may not have been regarded as anywhere near vital for Palauan culture during the last century, they are a "constitutive feature of modern subjectivity"[34] today. In being performed, they make the intangible concept of local identity very real. The apparent contradiction in Pacific constructions of identity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is in the perceived incompatibility between the concern with preserving continuity with yesterday's (imagined) lifeworlds, and the reconstitution of cultural identities in order to appropriately locate the communal Self within rapidly changing circumstances. In this environment, chants may become a resource that enables articulation of the past, present, and future cultural identities because of their undeniably local sound. The performance of chants renders the intangible concept of local identity very real. By involving language, gestures, and desires in performance, "music gives us a real experience of what the ideal could be."[35] At the same time, the patina[36] of the chants, the nostalgia attached to them, remains prominent and holds legitimizing power, but the contemporary function of chants of evoking a nostalgic yearning for an imagined past does not make them sonic museum pieces. On the contrary, the transient meanings that Palauan chants convey are multilayered and multivocal, as several voices at a time express differing and individual constructions and interpretations of cultural identity. The sonic signifier "chant," in a broad sense, has

retained an important place in Palauan culture. In the precolonial context, the signified was relatively static, but in the contemporary context, it is dynamic. Omengeredakl's functional flexibility in combination with its idiomatic, patina-laden stability has allowed an old genre to be filled with new meaning—meaning that is generated by the circumstances of the contemporary world, as collectively and individually perceived. Omengeredakl allow both performer and listener to (re)construct an imagined continuity with the ideational cultural constant "chant." They give to the listener different identities by placing these styles in contemporary contexts, giving us a "real experience of what the ideal could be" (Frith 1996).

NOTES

1. See Abels (2008).

2. This article is based on my doctoral fieldwork and recording activity in Palau from 2005 to 2007, my subsequent doctoral thesis (see Abels 2008), and analyses of twelve additional historical recordings (dating from between 1909 and 1965; a description of these collections can be found in Abels 2008). The words omengeredakl and bóid can be both singular and plural.

3. See endnote 14.

4. The labels keredekiil and kerrekord, which are also often applied to omengeredakl items, refer to a mode of performance. In everyday conversation, the terms bóid, keredekiil, and kerrekord are more common than omengeredakl, and they are sometimes used interchangeably (Tosko Sehat, Belsechel Philip, Victoria Johanes, Uodelchad Krai, Ibul Rechelbang, Matsko Omengkau, Oribech Josep, Vicenta S. Olkeriil, Masako Mongami, Kiyoko Sumang, pers. comm., February 18, 2005; Ibau Demei Oiterong, Ilong Rubasch Isaol, Magdalena Demek Towai, pers. comm., February 23; Idip Ngiratiou, Rikel Moses, Vicenta Idip, pers. comm., February 27, 2005). Compare Yamaguchi (1967), who does not list omengeredakl as a musical form, but describes bóid, keredekiil, and kerrekord as separate, nonrelated musical genres.

5. Ibau Demei Oiterong, Ilong Rubasch Isaol, Magdalena Demek Towai, pers. comm., February 23, 2005. Translator: Nancy Wong, Koror

6. Josephs (1990, 260).

7. "[. . .] gewöhnlich von drei Mann leise gesungen, dann von der Menge aufgenommen [. . .]" Krämer (1929, 297).

8. Then the musical form is usually *chesols*. Informant A, pers. comm., March 18, 2005.

9. Informant A, pers. comm., March 18, 2005.

10. Palau Society of Historians (2002, 27); Parmentier (1987, 98).

11. Palau Society of Historians (2002, 27).

12. Hijikata (1993, 196).

13. Hijikata (1993, 196).

14. Wilhelm Rengiil, one of my interlocutors, expressed this view (pers. comm., February 14, 2005). There are no extant statistics that prove or disprove this impression; however, it was shared by all Palauans I talked to about omengeredakl. Also, with all due caution, the occurrence of omengeredakl in the various recordings over time (mine notwithstanding) may be taken as indicative of this development: 1 of 4 recordings from the Hamburg South Seas Expedition recordings from 1909 was an omengeredakl (25 percent); so were five (or 10.4 percent) recordings from the 1936 Siemer collection (stored at the Phonogram Archives, Berlin); six recordings from the 1963 collection of Barbara B. Smith (the recordings of which fill six audio CDs); 4 of 12 (or 33.3 percent) items published by the Bureau of Arts and Culture in 2002, Koror; and four recordings prepared by myself. Further information on all of these collections can be found in Abels (2008).

15. The term "evolved traditional" in the sense I am using it here is based on the definition by Kaeppler (1992, 314 ff.). In Kaeppler's use, "evolved traditional" art forms are those that are in "continuation of traditional art (for example, as it was recorded at the time of European contact) that has evolved along indigenous lines, retaining its indigenous basic structure and sentiment." In identifying musical structure and sentiment as constants, Kaeppler uses the term in order to prevent music that has been incorporating nonstructural changes (such as pitch and timbre variations) from being categorically distinguished from their precontact forms, while at the same time pointing out that a perceivable difference from earlier forms does exist. Such differences need qualification in each individual case. But music is also a signifying practice, and the sentiment attached to both signifiers and signified is highly contextual, and therefore not unaffected by changes in its social environment. Therefore, I am using the term in a broader sense; evolved traditional music, in my usage, describes musical genres that may display tangible sonic deviances from earlier forms as well as developments in the conceptualization (including Kaeppler's "sentiment") of certain genres or sound events, while being identified by Palauans themselves as standing "in continuation of traditional art." Any developments in sonic result and sentiment have to be described in due detail in each case. For an earlier usage of the term "traditionally evolved," see Bailey (1978, 12).

16. Riosang Salvador, pers. comm., February 15, 2005.

17. "Beim Tanzgesang bóid steht alles nur auf, um unter Händeklatschen sich auf die Schenkel zu schlagen." Krämer (1926, 317). Krämer associates bóid with the "hand-clapping dances" "malagolei" and "iangsól."

18. Riosang Salvador, pers. comm., February 15, 2005.

19. It seems that there has been a tendency in Palau to assign the esbe part to exceptionally high-pitched male voices whenever such voice qualities are available. Although apparently there were few such voices, these men were sought after and considered capable of delivering the esbe part particularly well. Informant A, pers. comm., January 19, 2006.

20. Palau Society of Historians (2002, 21).

21. Josephs (1990, 163).

22. Informant A, pers. comm., January 18, 2006.

23. Josephs (1990, 179); informant A, pers. comm., January 18, 2006.

24. Josephs (1990, 179).

25. As a matter of fact, in contemporary omengeredakl singing, which has become a rare event, the esbe part is sometimes omitted for want of skilled singers or sufficient familiarity with the repertoire.

26. See Josephs (1990, 190, 293).

27. In the musical example shown in Figure 1, the chorus part has been notated in a manner implying pitch-distinct realization. However, the melodic line is inevitably rendered as a frequency band rather than a sequence of distinct pitches, which is the main constituent of the characteristic Palauan group singing.

28. Recording Abels 54.

29. Barbara B. Smith, recording 2 from CD I (digitized version of reel-to-reel recordings from her 1963 Palau fieldwork). Pacific Collection, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. For further details on these acoustical analyses, see Abels and Braasch (2006).

30. Recording Abels 61.

31. See Abels (2008, 228 ff.).

32. Ramarui (1980, 8).

33. Tonkinson (2000, 169).

34. Appadurai (1996, 3).

35. Frith (1996, 123).

36. "Patina" has been defined by Grant McCracken (1988) as referring to that trait of goods, items, and practices through which their age becomes indicative of their high position in existing value structures. "The patina of objects takes on its full meaning only in a proper context, of both other objects and spaces for these assemblies of objects and persons who know how to indicate, through their bodily practices, their relationships to these objects" (Appadurai, 1996, 75).

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