Is Eastern Insulindia a Distinct Musical Area?

L'est insulindien est-il une aire musicale distincte ?

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In this paper I attempt to distinguish the music of “eastern Insulindia” from that of other parts of Insulindia. Essentially this is an inquiry into certain musical features that are found in eastern Insulindia, together with a survey of where else in Insulindia they are or are not found. It is thus a distribution study, in line with others that have looked at the distribution of musical elements in Indonesia (Kunst 1939), the Philippines (Maceda 1998), Oceania (McLean 1979, 1994, 2014), and the region peripheral to the South China Sea (Revel 2013). With the exception of McLean, these studies have focused exclusively on material culture, namely musical instruments, tracing their geographical distribution and the vernacular terms associated with them. The aim has been to reveal cultural continuities and discontinuities and propose hypotheses about prehistoric settlement and culture contact in Insulindia and Oceania.

1. Ethnomusicologist.
2. For the purposes of this article and this special issue of Archipel, “Insulindia” is Island Southeast Asia, with the ad hoc exception of the Philippines and New Guinea. It includes all of the islands belonging to the modern nation of Indonesia, plus the whole of two islands, Borneo and Timor, that are shared between Indonesia and other nations. For eastern Insulindia, I will use a narrow definition to suit the region where my data are most abundant: for this article, it is the Indonesian province of Nusa Tenggara Timur, plus the half of Timor belonging to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. This region, which I abbreviate as NTT/TL, includes the islands of Sumba, Flores, Adonara, Solor, Lembata, Pantar, Alor, Savu, Rote, and Timor, along with other, smaller islands. A broader definition of “eastern” would include Maluku as well, but the data I have—admittedly less extensive than those for NTT/TL—suggest that music there does not have the same configuration of traits that I find in NTT/TL. This contrast will be apparent in the discussion below and particularly in the summary table (Fig. 10).
My concern here is less far-reaching. I aim to offer an initial mapping of present-day distributions of *immaterial* traits—not musical artifacts but ways of making music, ways of organizing groups of performers, and the musical concepts and compositional elements available in a music culture. This mapping reveals musical similarities and dissimilarities that in turn pose questions that may be addressed by researchers competent in archaeology, linguistics, and population genetics.

Except for Kunst 1939, the studies of distribution named above have avoided Insulindia, focusing instead on regions to the north (Revel, Maceda) and east (McLean). Furthermore, the emphasis on instruments has drawn attention away from vocal music, which is necessarily my focus since I am concerned with eastern Insulindia, where the principal forms of music-making are vocal. Kunst does discuss vocal music (1939, 1942), but he looks at the distribution of only two traits, which he sees as co-occurring indexes of megalithic culture. McLean also considers vocal music, but with regard exclusively to the presence or absence of polyphony. In his statistical clustering study (McLean 1979), he speaks simply of “polyphony,” undifferentiated, as one of the traits he tracks. In the more expansive book on the peopling of Polynesia (McLean 2014), he devotes chapter 6 to polyphony but recognizes only two kinds: melody-with-drone and parallelism. In contrast, Simha Arom et al. offer an eight-fold taxonomy of polyphonic techniques from all over the world, remarking in closing that

“polyphonic procedures permit an infinite number of combinations. The different plurilinear musics are distinguished then less by the procedures they employ than by the specific manner in which they combine them.” (Arom et al. 2007:1104)

The distinctions I want to make between varieties of polyphony (and other musical features) in Insulindia require this more detailed and specific approach. For this discussion I adopt Arom’s taxonomy and terminology.

Given the rapidity with which music can change, at least in its surface characteristics, I am not convinced that the musical practices of today can truly illuminate the movements of populations and cultures tens of thousands of years ago. Nevertheless it is clear that the similarities and dissimilarities in music systems throughout Insulindia call for some attempt at explanation. Moreover, they call for comparison, in the same terms and at the same level of detail, with musics to the north and east, in the Philippines and Oceania. I cannot attempt such explanation and comparison here. Instead I confine my efforts to trying to differentiate the music of the “eastern southeastern islands” (NTT/TL; see footnote 2) from the music of the islands to the west and northwest. In this I am responding to two observations by eminent scholars. One is a remark by Roger Blench:

3. Triple meter and the “tritone melos.” See the discussion under “tritones,” below.
"To explore the nuances of this topic [i.e., the possibility that polyphony came to Melanesia with the Austronesian expansion out of Taiwan], it is likely we will need to know more about the musical details of the polyphonic structures." (Blench 2014:14)

That is to say, the blanket term “polyphony” is insufficient to deal with Arom’s eight forms and their countless combinations. The other comment I am responding to is by James Fox in his essay in this volume:

“Given [a certain type of alliance relation] as one of the chief characteristics of the societies of eastern Indonesia, it is critical to note how such relationships contrast with all alliance relationships in western Austronesia.” (Fox, this issue p.189-216)

That is precisely what I try to do here: identify characteristics of the music of eastern Insulindia and contrast them with characteristics of other regions of Insulindia.

Now, which music of NTT/TL am I trying to distinguish? I will not deal here with the pop music, Catholic and Protestant church music, or explicitly Muslim music of NTT/TL, since these do not, I believe, differ markedly from their counterparts in other parts of Insulindia. Instead, the music I attempt to distinguish from others is the traditional music of NTT/TL, and the musics I attempt to distinguish it from are traditional musics of other regions. I use traditional in a specific sense, to designate music showing little or no obvious influence from outside Insulindia in its compositional forms or musical idiom. In the context of NTT/TL, if we take out of consideration the forms of popular and church music that my usage of traditional excludes, we are left almost entirely with village music. This is music associated with the concerns of rural life: the agricultural calendar, domestic events such as weddings and funerals, and communal work, celebrations, and rituals. Of course, urban popular music is well known in the villages, disseminated by radio, television, cassettes, VCDs, and even cell phones. The point is not that one does not find popular music in the villages, but that one does not find traditional music in the cities.

My focus here is on the organization of the music, or what is often called its texture (how many voices or parts? how do they relate to each other—do they sing or play the same melodies, or different melodies, or the same melodies but with variations?), and on some of the possibilities exploited in the music (can beats be subdivided in three? must phrases be organized in units of four? etc.).

4. Thus, music in European harmonized idioms or in Middle-Eastern idioms is excluded from the traditional category. Note that I do not propose traditional instruments as a criterion of tradition: traditional music can be played on imported instruments (depending on the music and the instrument). Also, I do not assume that all music using the interval of the third, so crucial to Euro-American standard harmony, is non-traditional. It is the use of the system of tonic-dominant harmony (necessarily involving thirds) that marks a music as, in my terms, non-traditional. Finally, it should go without saying that I am not disparaging music that is not traditional, nor music mixing the traditional and the foreign. I simply maintain that the distinctive features in the music of eastern Insulindia are to be sought in traditional music.
Let me relieve the suspense: the answer to my title’s question is a qualified yes. What I will demonstrate is that, in relation to the music of the rest of Insulindia, there is much that is anomalous in the music of NTT/TL, though only a few features may be considered unique. Most of the anomalous features have counterparts in one or another of the archipelago’s 6000 inhabited islands, as I will show. What actually makes NTT/TL musically distinctive is the high concentration of such features in this relatively compact southeastern region.

Here, then, are anomalous features of music in NTT/TL, along with indications of where else in Insulindia counterparts are known. For every feature I discuss I direct readers to audio examples, indicated by boldface numbers (mainly in the footnotes) that refer to entries in the discographical list at the end of the article. I need to make it clear, though, that this is an interim report. It is based on what I dare to say is a near-exhaustive examination of published recordings, plus a diligent search of field recordings, my own and others’—but in field recordings I can hardly hope to be comprehensive, as there are collections I have not discovered and researchers I do not know. And besides, there are hundreds of ethnic groups and thousands of places in Insulindia whose music has never been reported, and many whose music may have been lost before anyone recorded it. The generalizations I make here—“such-and-such a trait is found in island A of region B”—do not mean that the trait is not found in island C, elsewhere in the same region, only that it has not been reported from C. The generalizations are offered in the hopes of eliciting both supplementary examples and counterexamples. One final caveat: this article registers traits on the basis of their presence in a region. One recording of, say, triple meter in island D is enough for me to list it as a feature of D’s music. Ideally, however, I would be able to discuss the relative importance, either statistical or conceptual, of these traits—is triple meter typical there, or is it a fluke that just happened to come to my attention?—but my data do not yet permit this.

Group Singing

**Antiphony.** Antiphonal songs are often heard in communal dances and rituals and in cooperative labor. They are sung by two or more choruses in turn, answering each other. The singing group may be divided into male and female choruses (this is the most common format); or a single-sex or mixed chorus may be divided into sub-groups. Choruses typically sing in heterophonic unison, with or without occasional harmonies, or they may sing

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5. These observations are particularly true for Maluku. Twenty years ago, Margaret Kartomi published an article titled “Is Maluku still musicological terra incognita?” Despite her efforts and my own and those of a handful of other researchers, I believe it largely still is, at least at the level of detail that is needed.
in pervasive harmony (homorhythm). Sometimes one chorus sings in one of these textures and another in another: in Timor, for example, men’s choruses in antiphonal singing are often heterophonic, while women’s choruses tend to be less heterophonic and often have harmony.

Antiphonal should be distinguished from responsorial. In responsorial singing a chorus responds to one or more soloists; in antiphony a chorus responds to a chorus. The difference is not essentially musical: it lies rather in the social relations embodied in performance—the complementarity of antiphonal singing in contrast to the leader/follower or individual/group relation of responsorial singing. In antiphony, typically, the two groups have approximately equal roles and equal weight in the performance. One side does not lead or dominate the other. The songs often have no soloist, or a soloist with only a minimal function as precentor, getting a song started or cueing new words to be sung by the chorus. As soon as the chorus catches the new tune or new text, it takes over, and the soloist merges with the group.

Two types of antiphonal singing are found in eastern Insulindia. The opposed choruses may sing contrasting melodies or melodic phrases (as in Fig. 1), or they may alternate in singing the same melody. (Both procedures

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6. For precise definitions of these technical terms, see Arom et al., 2007. I provide loose working definitions here. **Unison** means that everyone sings the same pitches at the same time, by convention, singing in octaves (as when men and women sing the same melody together in their typical registers) is classed as unison. **Heterophony** is when everyone sings approximately the same melody at approximately the same time. (Imagine a group of people sitting around at a campfire or a party, relaxing and singing a well-known tune. Not everyone sings it in the same way, and some people can barely sing in tune or in time—yet no one is expelled for “singing it wrong.” That’s heterophony.) **Harmony** here means any pitch other than a unison or octave that is intentionally sung simultaneously with another pitch, it does not mean only the harmonies regularly heard in "common practice" tonal music. **Homorhythm** is the use of harmony (in the not-specifically-tonal sense) as the predominant texture in a song or a section of a song, with all parts or harmonic lines moving mainly in synchrony (Minor rhythmic discrepancies and subdivisions are encompassed within homorhythm, but if the parts move with rhythmic independence, it is **counterpoint**, not homorhythm.) Because of the criterion of simultaneity in the definition of harmony, all harmony is essentially homorhythmic. The lines between various kinds of homorhythm or harmony are sometimes subjective, and I have not tried to distinguish them rigorously. There is occasional or sporadic harmony, sounded without consistency in what is essentially a heterophonic texture, there is selective harmony, where certain tones in a melody are usually given a harmony, but most others are left unadorned, and there is pervasive harmony. The important distinction for this article is between occasional harmony (momentary homorhythm), and the extensive homorhythm characterizing a whole song or song segment.

7. When the opposition is between a small group and a chorus, the distinction between antiphonal and responsorial singing is, like that between sporadic and pervasive harmony in the previous footnote, subjective, having to do with the relative “weight” of the small group’s part vis-à-vis the larger group’s. If the two groups’ contributions have more or less equal weight, I would call the texture antiphonal.

8. Some definitions restrict **antiphony** to the direct repetition by one chorus of what the other chorus sang. In that schema, all antiphony is of my second or **iterative** type, and what I call **contrastive** antiphony would then be considered responsorial. But that construction obscures both the social dimension I wish to signal, and the musical similarity of antiphonal and responsorial forms of iterative singing.
are also found in responsorial singing.) In the first type, which I call *contrastive* antiphony, the contrast between the melodies is sometimes on the order of “antecedent” and “consequent” phrases in the Euro-American idiom (as in Fig. 1). Contrastive antiphony is widespread in Timor and in the western region of Flores (Manggarai). It would not be surprising to find it elsewhere in NTT/TL as well, but so far I have heard it only from Pantar. I have not found contrastive antiphony outside NTT/TL. Conversely, the second type, which I call *iterative* antiphony, does appear outside NTT/TL—in Aru (Maluku), Sumbawa, and among Toraja in the Sulawesi highlands—but I know of only one brief instance of it in NTT/TL.

I have not encountered antiphonal group singing of either type in the central and western islands (Borneo, Java, Sumatra), and for those regions it is neither reported in the literature nor documented in published recordings or field recordings I know of. This may be more an indication of what ethnomusicologists tend to be interested in (instruments, professionalized performances) than of what is (or was) out there.

A natural context for

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9. Timor: NT5 trs 10, 11, 12 and T3 _001_02 (Bunaq), T1 tr 19 (Mambai), T2 trs A1, A3, A4 (Ema), T5 tr 19 (unidentified group in Timor-Leste); T8 tr 3 (unidentified group recorded in Atambua), T9 trs 4, 5, 7, 12, 15 (Biboki). Western Flores: F1a _003_07, F2 tr 1 (>4:35), 16; F7 tr 10 (opening).


11. Aru: M3 tr 4 (11:51). Sumbawa: IN5 vol 1 tr 5. Toraja: SL2 (Rising sun: *bugi’*), and SL3 tr 5; NTT (Lio, Flores): F3 tr 2 between 8:30 and 9:45. A special kind of iterative antiphony can occur in music for the Toraja funerary round-dance *badong* (SL1 trs 5, 7, 8, and SL2 [Setting sun: *badong*], where it is discussed at length, with audio examples and graphic analysis). Two or four small groups of soloists, with only a few singers in each, may sing antiphonally, their passages interspersed with singing by a full chorus. It is the soloist groups that are in antiphony, not the chorus. I may add that the serial duets of Flores and Timor, discussed below, can be seen as instances of iterative antiphony, but they are not instances of group singing, which is the main topic here.

12. Virginia Gorlinski confirms (p. c., 2015) that she too did not encounter antiphonal singing during her years of research in central and eastern Borneo, and Patricia Matusky makes the same statement (p. c., 2015) regarding her research in Malaysian Borneo. Both researchers remark that *responsorial* singing is common in those regions.

13. Th. Pigeaud, in his exhaustive 1938 work on Javanese folk performances, remarks that “round dances and their songs [*rei-dansen en –zangen*] by girls and women . . . on the occasion of annual village feasts and the like” do exist but he is not going to deal with them, as they have not been developed into paid performances (*ontwikkeld tot vertoningen die men tegen beloning last opvoeren*) (Pigeaud 1938:245). It is not clear why he specifies that the dancers and singers he will not discuss are female. It seems unlikely that men were excluded from village celebrations.

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*Archipel* 90, Paris, 2015
antiphonal songs is communal dance, involving large groups of men and women, and I find it hard to believe that in agricultural villages west of Sulawesi there are no harvest celebrations or other occasions for the whole community to dance and sing together. These communities may, however, find responsorial singing, where the whole community responds together to a soloist, more aesthetically or culturally satisfying than singing that depicts the complementary opposition of groups within the society. It may also be the case, at least in Java and Bali, that the taste for gamelan music and for professional or highly rehearsed performances—or now for urban popular music—has reduced the appeal of group singing to the point where people no longer bother to do it.

**Exuberant Heterophony**

Two types of heterophony have already been mentioned: “loose unison” or unisonal heterophony—all voices approximating unison but not achieving it precisely (and probably not seeking to)—and sporadic harmony, the occasional sounding of optional harmonies in an essentially heterophonic texture. In Timor, however, there is also a kind of singing where the apparent aim is to sing neither in approximate unison, nor in occasional harmony, but rather to sing explosively, chaotically, going every which way but ending up in the same place.

This kind of singing has also been recorded in village Java and Madura. One could see these latter recordings as in part humorous vocal imitations of gamelan music, but there are also passages of wild heterophony quite different from the regulated interplay of parts in the Javanese gamelan. Another example, featuring only two singers and sitting halfway between exuberant heterophony and the duet singing of Minangkabau salawat dulang (described below), is heard in Lampung. The Javanese, Madurese, and Sumatran instances are all found in the context of Islam-oriented performance, but the Timorese instances are not.

**Vocal Polyphony: Drone, Hocket**

I wish to propose as a generalization that the predominant mode of traditional group singing throughout Island Southeast Asia is in unison, whether tight or heterophonic. Often, but not always, it is responsorial. If we allow for

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14. I take this term from Jack Body’s album notes for his excellent *jemblung* CD, IN1.
15. T2 (Ema) trs A1, A3, A4 (in all of these the female chorus is more restrained than the male), T3 item _002_08 (Bunag), T5 tr 36 (Atauro), T9 (Biboki) trs 2, 11.
16. IN1 trs 7 (Madura), 8 (Pekalongan).
17. IN6 vol 3 tr 15 (*dikir bumi*).
18. The force of “traditional” in this formulation is to exclude from the discussion singing in
heterophonic approximation of unison and also for limited non-unison overlap of soloist and chorus, virtually all group singing that falls into the “gamelan and wayang complex,” the “Muslim music complex,” and the “Melayu music complex” is unisonal. 19

If this generalization is accepted, then all traditional forms of non-unisonal group singing are exceptional for Insulindia, and their comparative distributions in NTT/TL and outside that area are of interest for that reason. There are several varieties: the chorus may be divided into segments with a polyphonic relation to each other, 20 or the chorus may be unisonal and the soloist(s) stand in polyphonic relation to it, or polyphony may obtain in both aspects.

Flores offers impressive examples, as in Fig. 2, which shows a brief excerpt from the middle of a song from a Nage village near Boawae, in Central Flores. A melody is sung in octaves by one part of the chorus (stems down, lower staff), joined by the soloist (stems down, upper staff); another singer (stems up, upper staff) sings in parallel seconds above the soloist, another few singers hold a shifting drone above the chorus, in the soloist’s range (sustained tones at top of lower staff). 21 An example from a Sikka village near Maumere begins with two soloists and a homophonic chorus in mixed (non-parallel) intervals, but halfway through the piece, a breakaway segment of the chorus emerges, singing in hocket, each voice on its own pitch. The hocket has the effect of a tone-cluster repeated as a drone, and the main chorus also sings a syllabic drone. 22 This hocket device occurs in other songs from Sikka as well. 23

Hocket and drones are unusual for vocal music even in NTT/TL, let alone in the rest of Insulindia. Drones figure in some of the duet singing discussed

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European popular-music or church-music idioms, which are typically harmonized according to the conventions of European standard-practice harmony. These forms of non-unison singing are found all over Insulindia.

19. See Yampolsky 2001a (or its online posting) for description of these complexes. Readers familiar with Central Javanese gamelan music may object that the female singer (pesindhen) and the male chorus (gerong) are not in unison with each other. This is true, but I would reply that (a) the gerong itself is in unison, and (b) the male and female singers are not engaged in group singing in the way that men and women at a round dance are. The chorus and the soloist contribute distinct vocal strands to an ensemble that encompasses singing not as the principal musical element but as one component among many.

20. Arom et al. 2007 define polyphony as plurilineality: anything that is not in unison or octaves (see footnote 6 above). Note that antiphony is not necessarily polyphonic: it is monophonic if the opposing choruses are themselves in unison and do not overlap on different pitches.

21. F7 tr 3 (Nage). Other complex singing groups from central Flores are heard in F7 trs 1 and 2 (Nage) and 4–8 (Ngada). Though I have not analyzed scales in eastern Insulindia and am not proposing some general uniqueness or exceptional character in them, I have to point out the extraordinary scale of the song in Fig. 2, with three semitones crammed into the ambitus of a diminished fifth.

22. F6 tr 5 (Sikka).

23. F5 trs 1 and 3, F6 tr 2 (all Sikka).
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below for eastern Flores and eastern Timor, but aside from the duets, vocal drones are rare in Timor and, while common in central Flores, are not found in Manggarai, the western end of the island. There is an instance of syllabic drone from Rote. Outside NTT/TL, there is syllabic drone in a song recorded in Tanimbar (Maluku). Drones are also found in Toraja music, in various forms: as a reciting tone (approached and left via other tones), syllabic, or sustained, often the entire chorus holds the drone, and a soloist weaves around it. Elsewhere in Insulindia drones occur only in instrumental music (as on double and paired flutes in Flores, Timor, and Toraja; on lutes, such as the *sampek* and *gambus*, with open strings sounded repeatedly, also on the *sasando* tube-zither). Hocket, in the form of interlocking and overlapping melodic-rhythmic lines played, often with some improvisation, on multiple.

Fig. 2 – Parallel seconds and drone. Excerpt from “Dioe” (Nage, Flores) (F7 tr 3 >2:33).

24. In addition to the drone shown in Fig. 2 (an excerpt from the second song in F7 tr 3), drones are also heard in parts of the first song in that track, as well as in F7 trs 1, 2, 4, 5, and F6 trs 5 and 12 (shifting drone), all from Nage and Ngada people in central Flores. There is a pulsing drone under a solo in F3 (Lio) >17:46. A syllabic drone is heard in F4 tr 22 from Solor. As for Timor, apart from the duets, there is an intermittent drone in T2 tr B7. José Maceda (1986: 14), citing the same LP of *Ema* music (T2), mentions drones in Timor, but his description indicates that he means monotone responses in a call-and-response framework (Examples of such monotones are T2 trs A2, B6, B8, and B9.) These may, of course, be considered drones, but not in the sense I (and Arom) give to the term: since there is nothing going on melodically at the same time as the monotone responses, there is no plurilinearity, and the monotones therefore do not come into this discussion.

25. NT1 tr 11 (Rote).
26. M1 item _005_05 (Tanimbar).
27. SL1 (Toraja) trs 3, 4, 11–16. Note that these drones (and also some of those from Flores heard on F7, including the one in Fig. 2) are positioned in the *mitale* of the music’s range, or near the top. Arom stipulates, too narrowly, that drones are at the bottom: “the term drone [*bourdon*] designates one or several sustained tones... that serve as foundation for one or several melodies proceeding simultaneously above it” (2007: 1092).
instruments, each contributing only one or a few tones, occurs in gong ensembles where gongs are distributed among several players (as is common in NTT/TL, see Part 3 below). Extended melody, produced by paired lines interlocking in composed hocket (*kotekan*), is a crucial device in Balinese instrumental music, and simpler forms of unimprovised hocket occur also in Javanese gamelan music (*imbal* techniques). But in vocal music outside NTT/TL hocket occurs only in the unpitched vocables of Balinese *sanghyang* and its derivatives (*kecak, janger*).

**Vocal Polyphony: Homorhythm and Counterpoint**

Occasional homorhythm is common in NTT/TL, as is consistent homorhythm, though neither is as widespread as unisonal heterophony. The predominant (though not exclusive) form of consistent homorhythm in NTT/TL is parallelism: we have already seen (Fig. 2) a melody rendered in parallel seconds while embedded in a larger choral context of drone and octave doubling. *Lala Ina Rou* is a song from Biboki in Indonesian Timor, whose chorus is sung in parallel fourths throughout. In general, the most common parallel interval is the third, possibly reflecting church-music influence, but the full course of tonal harmony is often absent. Homorhythm in assorted (i.e. non-parallel) intervals occurs in some songs of central Flores and in passages in the serial duets of eastern Timor and eastern Flores (discussed below). Outside NTT/TL, there is occasional homorhythm in Aru (Maluku) and parallelism in Kei (Maluku), North and South Sulawesi, and West Kalimantan. Kenyah in Borneo and Sarawak sing in mixed intervals, some *mazani* songs in North Sulawesi are in mixed intervals, with repeated cadences on a minor seventh (Fig. 3).

In Tanimbar (Maluku) there are songs with a narrow tonal range where each pitch has an assigned harmony, as shown in Fig. 4. This is again an

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28. Timor: T1 tr 19 (Mambai), T3 items _001_03 and _04 (Bunaq), T9 trs 9, 15 (Biboki), NT5 trs 8 (Tetun), 10 &12 (Bunaq). Flores: F3 >3:10 (Lio); F7 tr 9 (>2:52; *darding* inserted in *mbata*, with selective fifths; Manggarai). Rote: NT4 index 9. Adonara: F1b item _001_013.

29. T9 tr 17 (Biboki). During this recording session, the same singers sang this song in two other ways—parallel fifths and unison—before settling on fourths.

30. F3 >9:45 (Lio); F6 trs 12–14 (Toto region, central Flores, population originally from Lio).

31. F6 trs 5 (Sikka) and 12, 13 (Toto), F7 tr 5 (Nage).


33. Borneo: B3 trs 1, 9 and B7 tr 1 (Kenyah). Sulawesi: SL3 trs 9, 11 (*mazani*, Tombulu).

34. M1 item _001_10 (Tanimbar). The transcription in Fig. 4 has been transposed down a half-step for convenience, and the description here matches the transcription. Several songs in the M1 collection follow the harmonic scheme shown in Fig. 4.
instance of homorhythm in assorted intervals. The melodic phrases have a repeated descending contour, Bb-G-F, finishing on F. The harmony (below the melody) uses only two tones, G (as harmony for Bb or as unison with G in the melody) and Eb (as harmony for G and F). Thus while there are frequent harmony thirds, the cadences are always on a second (F-Eb). Like the mazani songs cadencing on sevenths, this is thirds-based harmony with a twist.

The two voices in Fig. 4 move up and down together. (Please forgive the almost inescapable spatial imagery.) Such motion is sometimes described as “parallel,” but the term is confusing, since the intervals themselves are not the same throughout. I offer the term similar motion for this behavior, reserving parallel motion for the case where a constant interval is maintained (as in Lala Ina Rou). Both similar and parallel motion contrast with divergent motion, where one part or line in a chorus goes up and another simultaneously goes down (contrary motion), or one part stays steady while the other goes up or down (oblique motion). The reason for emphasizing these distinctions is that divergent motion, unlike parallel or similar motion, gives a strong impression of contrasting, equally weighted parts occurring simultaneously.

Fig. 5 gives instances of both contrary and oblique motion in a Tetun-language song from Indonesian Timor, and Fig. 6 shows a brief instance of oblique motion from a homorhythmic song from Lio in Flores. An extreme
form of divergent motion is found in Borneo, in duets for the *sape’* (or *sampek*) plucked lute. Two players play the same melody, each on his own instrument, one in the upper octave and one in the lower; they articulate the same pulse and play on nearly every beat, so they are almost entirely in homorhythm, but each musician plays his own melodic variations on the melody, causing frequent contrary motion. One clearly hears two contrasting melodic entities at once, and the music thus approaches the category of counterpoint.

Counterpoint, however, is defined by Arom et al. as “any polyphonic structure based on the superposition of two or more distinct melodic lines that differ in rhythmic articulation” (2007:1095). In these terms, it is rhythmic independence that distinguishes counterpoint, and the instances of divergent homophony I have just described lack this independence; they thus fall fully under homorhythm.

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37. This would seem to be by definition heterophony, yet it is also consistently homorhythmic. I do not know of comparable practices in NTT/TL. The instance I describe here is more extreme than the *sape’* duets found in published CDs. Unfortunately, I cannot give a traceable citation of the recording I am describing: it was posted on Facebook, by someone who had received it directly from one of the performers. It is a duet identified as *Sampik Lepo’ Timai*, played by two musicians from Sarawak, Solomon Gau and Jimpau Balan.

Fig. 5 – Contrary and oblique motion. Excerpt from “Saero” (Tethun, Indonesian Timor) (NT5 tr 9). Transcribed by Aaron Pettigrew.

Fig. 6 – Cadence with contrary and oblique motion. Gawi song (Lio, Flores) (F3 >24:15).
Arom allows that there may also be “counterpoint tending toward homorhythm” (contrepoint à tendance homorhythmique). The Ngada song Goegoe fits this description. A two-pitch ostinato melody is held by men in a low register and women an octave above them. Two small groups of female soloists maintain different, alternating ostinati in the octave above the bass ostinato, but they are not rhythmically independent from it: instead they subdivide some of its held pitches and merge with the bass for others. Then there are male soloists, and people just calling out in rhythm, and a jingling bell. This complex texture has elements of both homorhythm and counterpoint.

Clearer instances of counterpoint occur in musics where a soloist sings floridly over a unison chorus. Often the soloist merges melodically and rhythmically with the chorus and then separates from it. One is always aware of two lines pulling against each other: This soloistic counterpoint, which, when it soars above the chorus, I term a descant, occurs not only in Alor and Flores but also at the other end of Insulindia, in Nias. (Nias will come up again in this article.)

Full Aromian counterpoint—two or more rhythmically distinct melodies, performed simultaneously—is rare in Insulindia. In my view, some of the serial duets from NTT/TL offer examples, and there is another from Manggarai (Fig. 7). Outside NTT/TL, there is an example from upland Central Sulawesi. It is possible, however, that all of these examples have less rhythmic independence than is called for in Arom’s definition, in which case they would all fall under the heading of counterpoint tending toward homorhythm. Finally, there is flowing, improvisatory, loosely imitative counterpoint at the opening of Minangkabau salawat dulang duets (discussed below).

38. Arom, p. c., 2015. In that case, I would propose also homorhythm with contrapuntal tendencies, which would cover what I feel is the quasi-contrapuntal nature of Fig. 5 and 6.

39. F7 tr 8, recorded 1993. The description here is based on this 1993 recording F1a item 003_02 is another version of Goegoe, recorded in the same village (Kampung Wogo, Kabupaten Ngada) in 1992; cf. also F1a 003_01, an unspecified dance song with the same construction.

40. NT3 tr 16 (Talpala, Alor). Also F3 >8:00 and >9:45 (Lio), and F6 tr 1 >3:24 (Sikka). The Sikka soloist exploits oblique motion against held tones in the chorus. 

41. SM5 trs 3, 4, 5 (Hilisimaetano, Nias).

42. F7 tr 10 (Rongga, Manggarai).

43. SL3 tr 6 (Uma-speakers, Pipikoro region, Central Sulawesi).
Serial duets are found in two locations—and apparently only two—in the whole of Insulindia: among western Lamaholot-speakers (and some Sikka-speakers) at the eastern end of Flores and in the neighboring western region of Solor; and among Fataluku-speakers at the eastern end of Timor-Leste. Surrounded by music cultures devoted to the large unison or polyphonic choruses I have been describing so far, these enclaves of duet-singing make a distinctive statement.

I call the duets serial because they are sung in strophic alternation by two or more pairs of singers. In Timor, a common performance pattern is as follows: each strophe contains one line of a two-line poem. Each line is stated by one duo and repeated by another; thus one poem is complete in four statements of the melody (if only two duos are taking part). More duos means more repetitions of each line. The pattern in Flores is different (Rappoport 2010:239).

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constitute, as Dana Rappoport has written (2010), an enigma. She suggests (2015) that their presence in Flores is the result of migration from Timor, but at present this is conjectural, and it does not explain why the duets are so isolated and atypical in both locations.

A further stylistic puzzle is that both duet traditions feature an abundance of major- and minor-second intervals between the voices, sometimes joined in parallel strings and sometimes “sought.”

A crucial characteristic of these duets is the presence of two distinct voices, and therefore passages in unison or unisonal heterophony are usually absent. (The voices may converge on unisons, but then they diverge again.) The most common texture is homorhythmic, but some repertoires or local styles in both regions seem to favor more counterpoint, while in others one voice mainly holds a syllabic drone under the melody. The degree to which the Flores and East Timor duets differ in their polyphonic practices remains to be studied. Fig. 8 is a transcription of one strophe of a vaihoho (the term for the duets in Fataluku). Transcriptions of Lamaholot duets appear in some of Rappoport’s publications.

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45. “Sought” here alludes to the phenomenon of “seeking seconds” that has been identified as a characteristic of duet singing in the Shop region of Bulgaria. Timothy Rice introduced the English phrase in his dissertation (1977: 15), attributing it (in its original Bulgarian form) to the Bulgarian musicologist Nikolaj Kaufman. Donna Buchanan (p. c., 2015) has collegially tracked down and translated for me a passage in Kaufman’s writings that clarifies his use of the term: “For Shop diaphony, harmonic combinations at the interval of the second are especially characteristic. The singers even ‘seek’ to obtain seconds . . . . The ‘seeking’ of seconds of this type most often occurs in the following manner: when the melody of the first voice moves above the tonic, the second voice sings the drone pitch on the tonic. When, however, the first voice descends to the tonic, a second voice descends to the subtonic pitch. This ‘evasion’ of the unison occurs in different ways—sometimes simultaneously, but sometimes not simultaneously, so as to obtain interesting diaphonic moves [or progressions]. . . .” (Kaufman 1967 [etc.], trans. from Bulgarian by Donna Buchanan; the Bulgarian equivalents of “seek” and “seeking” are in quotation marks in Kaufman’s text). “Seeking seconds” is pervasive in both the Flores and Timor duets. For example, in Fig. 8, in the last three measures of the first and third systems, the two voices reach a unison and then the upper voice stays steady while the other drops—in oblique motion—to a second below. Dana Rappoport has also remarked “seeking seconds” in the dünd’i’ funeral repertoire of Toraja in Sulawesi (2000: 244; SL2 [Setting Sun: dongi]).

46. Dana Rappoport has published recordings of the Flores styles on F4, and a few are heard on my F6. I have not yet published recordings from my ongoing research on the Timor-Leste vaihoho duets (T10). For Flores, F4 trs 5 and 12 exemplify a more contrapuntal style; F4 trs 3, 6, 7, and F6 tr 7 mix counterpoint and homorhythm; F4 trs 2 and 8 and F6 tr 6 are mainly homorhythmic; and F4 trs 1 and 20 have melody with shifting, intermittent drone.

47. An excerpt from F4 tr 6 is transcribed in Rappoport 2010: 243, and one from F4 tr 7 in Rappoport 2011: 141. The vaihoho strophe in Fig. 8 of the present paper is transcribed from T10 12Y11M08 T08.
The duet style of western Lamaholot- and Fataluku-speakers is so unusual that I will go outside the designated bounds of this article and mention that duets with an abundance of seconds are also found in some of the Admiralty Islands in the Islands Region of Papua New Guinea. These duets are apparently not serial, and they are more exclusively homorhythmic, featuring parallel descent through chromatic steps. I should point out that Gerald Messner (1981:439) maintains that the simultaneous intervals are not tempered seconds (100 or 200 cents) but a “very specific interval of 160 cents.”

Among Fataluku-speakers on the south coast of Timor-Leste, there is an additional polyphonic component: when many duos are present, instead of responding one-by-one to the initial duo, they may all respond at once, but deliberately without coordination. Each duo sings not as part of a chorus, but as a duo. All sing the same text (as introduced by the first duo), but each begins in its own time, at its own pitch, and there is even the option of responding with a different melody. This practice seems halfway between simple heterophony and what Rappoport (2013) calls polymusic. At a Toraja funeral there may be many separate choral circles, each singing a different

48. PNG1, PNG3.
badong, without regard to what is going on in the other circles. The Timorese choruses, too, are uncoordinated—but the difference is that in Timor all the duos are singing the same text and responding to the same initial verse.

I know of one other duet tradition (not serial duets) in Insulindia: the salawat dulang of Minangkabau in West Sumatra, which is a medium for Muslim tenets and precepts.\footnote{SM2 disc 1 tr 17, SM3 tr 6, SM8 tr 12.} In the unmetered introduction, the two singers sing in overlapping alternation that can become (when the overlapping is protracted) free-meter, improvised, loosely imitative counterpoint. Later, a steady beat is introduced and the contrapuntal component recedes: the pattern becomes alternating solos that join in heterophony and then split again into alternating solos. Drones are not present. Although in texture the introductory sections of salawat dulang resemble the duet traditions in NTT/TL, their sound is quite different: the Sumatran form’s recurrent pattern of alternation then heterophonic fusion of the voices is distinctive, as is the headlong linear quality caused in part by the non-strophic character of the melody. The simultaneous intervals in salawat dulang seem accidental conjunctions of independent lines, whereas in the more tightly coordinated NTT/TL duets they arise from the systematic avoidance of heterophony in favor of distinct voices. Moreover, after the introduction the salawat dulang singers move into a second phase in which they sing popular tunes in heterophonic unison (substituting lyrics with Muslim content). These melodies would be idiomatically impossible in the NTT/TL duets.

**Rhythmic, Metric, and Harmonic Features**

Several features of the music of NTT/TL are independent of any particular texture but are, like plurilinearity itself, anomalous in the larger context of music in Insulindia. These features occur not only in plurilinear textures but also in the unisonal (monophonic) textures that I excluded from the earlier discussion.

*Triple meter:* Triple meter (or one could consider it triple subdivision of a steady beat organized in longer cycles) is common in dance songs in Timor and parts of Flores.\footnote{Timor: NT5 (Tetun) tr 9 (see Fig. 5); NT5 (Bunaq) trs 10 & 13; T1 (Mambai) tr 19; T3 item _001_03 (Bunaq), T3 item _002_04 (women only), T3 item _002_07, T4 trs 4 (recorded in Hatubulico), 17a (recorded in Vilaalè), T6 (Meto?) tr 16. Flores: F1a item _004_09 & _10 (mbata, Manggarai), F3 09:45, 24:15, etc. (gawi dance songs, Lio), F4 tr 16 (Tana ‘Ai), F6 tr 3 (Sikka, this is in twelve, with four main beats subdivided in three).} It is also found in North Sulawesi, South Sulawesi, and West Kalimantan.\footnote{North Sulawesi: SL3 tr 12, a Tombulu (Minahasa) macan song (though this may be the result of church influence). South Sulawesi (Toraja): SL2 (Rising Sun: bugi’, southern style). West Kalimantan: B7 tr 12 (Kayan Mendalam).} On the other hand, it is extremely rare in Java and Bali, where virtually everything is subdivided in twos, fours, eights, etc.\footnote{When I describe gamelan music, I am referring to the traditional repertoire, not to modern,
In Sumatra triple meter occurs in one category of Melayu dance tunes, the *lagu dua* repertoire, but it seems likely these tunes are European in origin.\(^{53}\) Leaving that repertoire aside, triple meter is as rare in Sumatra as it is in Java and Bali. But, intriguingly, it surfaces again in *hoho* songs in Nias, and in percussion music in Siberut (Mentawai).\(^{54}\)

**Complex meters.** There are other non-duple meters in NTT/TL, besides triple meter. I refer here only to meters that pervade a piece or a substantial section from beginning to end.\(^{55}\) The meter of the *dolo-dolo* and other dances in eastern Flores is a seven (3+2+2), first slow, then fast. Played fast, the meter sounds deceptively duple, but tools to slow down the sound confirm it is still a seven. Sevens are also found in Manggarai, at the western end of Flores.\(^{56}\) Sevens are common in Sumba, and a boat-building song from Ataúro (an island off Dili in Timor-Leste) is partly in seven.\(^{57}\)

Such meters are known in Kalimantan, but they have not been reported for Sulawesi or Maluku—nor, strikingly, from Java, Bali, or Sumatra. In East Kalimantan, Benuaq play a ritual curing music on gong ensemble, with deliberately innovative compositions. A teacher of mine in Yogyakarta in the early 1980s wanted to enter a competition for new compositions. A key criterion for selection was that the composition include a technique or feature not found in traditional Javanese music. If this is the criterion for new composition, then it becomes impossible to generalize about the idiom without distinguishing between traditional and modern.

\(^{53}\) SM7 trs 14 (Riau) and 17 (North Sumatra). See David Goldsworthy's discussion (1979:319–51). *Lagu dua* is one of the three categories of *ronggeng* melodies, all of which are dance tunes. *Lagu dua* tunes are played at fast tempo. Goldsworthy says they are in "simple triple metre (3/4) or a combination of simple triple and compound duple metre (3/4 [and] 6/8)" (340). An example is B6 tr 21. The other two categories, *senandung* (slow tempo) and *mak inang* (medium), are in duple meter. Goldsworthy regards the entire genre of *ronggeng* music as "post-Portuguese." In particular, he remarks of the dance in triple meter: "Some Portuguese-like dance movements are found in *lagu dua* dances, such as hopping up and down on the spot with the left hand on the hip and the right hand on the shoulder" (340). The singers who recorded SM7 tr 14 for me did a dance when the tempo sped up and become unsingable: facing each other, each stood on the right leg and extended the left leg until their feet touched, then they switched legs. This also seems European rather than Indonesian in spirit.

\(^{54}\) Nias: SM1 tr 16, SM5 tr 6, second song (>2:15). Marlene Patton analyzes a number of other *hoho* in her M.A. thesis (1987). In the corpus of four *hoho* she analyzes in great detail, she describes the main sections ("body") of two as being in 6/8 and one in 6/4. Siberut: SM4 disc 1 tr 1, disc 2 tr 7, SM6 tr 16.

\(^{55}\) The music called *senggayung* (B7 trs 5-8), played by people along the Upper Jelai River in the interior of West Kalimantan, is a separate case, with no counterpart I know of elsewhere in Insulindia. Here, instead of a consistent complex meter played throughout, we hear spectacular heterometer—seemingly random sequences of fives, sevens, ones, elevens, etc. It is impossible to detect an ostinato or assign a single meter to the sequence, but it is clearly not random, since in performance the sequence is played through once and then repeated note-for-note. A transcription of one of these pieces appears in Yampolsky 2001b (Fig. 3a and 3b).

\(^{56}\) Sikka: F5 trs 4 & 7 (3+2+2), tr 1 (3+4), F6 tr 3 >7:31 (3+2+2). Larantuka, East Flores: F1b item _001_050. Manggarai: F1a item _004_09 & _10.

\(^{57}\) Sumba: IN8 tr 11. Ataúro: T5 tr 36 from 3:02 (but by 5:30 it seems to have slid into a straight duple, one two three rest).
a 14-beat ostinato, \( 2+2+2+2+3+3 \), and Tunjung play a 13-beat ostinato, \( 3+3+2+5 \). Another Benuaq ostinato, \( 2+2+2+3+4+4+2+4+2 \), adds up to 30. In West Kalimantan, Ot Danum female shamans (\textit{jaja'}) sing some of their songs (\textit{timang}) in a meter of five, and Kanayatn have a gong melody in seven.\(^{58}\)

\textbf{"Non-four" cycles.} I use this inelegant term for strophes or melodic cycles that—unlike most melodies of traditional Javanese and Balinese gamelan music—are not built out of a succession of four-beat phrases or units.\(^{59}\) Four-based cycles, as well as unmetered and variable ones, are also common in NTT/TL, of course, but it is the "non-fours" that are noteworthy here. Examples abound in Timor and Flores. The distribution of non-fours outside of NTT/TL has not been well studied. I have found them only in North Sulawesi and Nias. Various non-four cycles, each constituting the total length of one statement of a melody repeated multiple times in performance, are shown in Fig. 9.

\textbf{Phase shifts, and discoordination of beat and melody.} I wish to offer this feature tentatively, but still to offer it. I have noticed a number of instances where the "external" rhythmic organization—marked on a drum, or by dancers' feet—is out of phase with the organization of the melody itself. For example, in one video of a Timorese dance, the dance is in a four-step, four-beat pattern, but the melody is 19 beats long, so it has four different registrations vis-à-vis the dance step. In another video, a 22-beat melody is sung to an eight-beat dance step; again it has four registrations. In a third, the melodic cycle is either 32 or 36 beats, depending on whether the boys’ chorus sings its part as 10+8 or 14+8. (The girls' chorus is always 14 beats.) The dance step covers eight beats, so it either comes out exactly with the chorus (four dance cycles to one melodic cycle) or four beats off. One might think that in the latter case the singers would wait four beats and begin the next melodic cycle on the first beat of the dance step, but this does not happen: they begin the next melodic cycle as soon as the previous one finishes, even though it is in the middle of the dance step. Toward the end of the video, the boys falter and drop two beats before taking up their chorus. This puts the start of the melody on beat 6 of the dance step, three-quarters out of phase with the dance cycle, but again the singing and dancing continue regardless.\(^{60}\)

\(^{58}\) Benuaq 14 beat ostinato: \textit{B7} tr 13. Tunjung 13-beat ostinato: \textit{B2} tr 17. Benuaq 30-beat ostinato: \textit{B2} tr 5. Ot Danum \textit{timang}: \textit{B7} tr 19. Kanayatn: \textit{B7} tr 10. With regard to the ostinati and beat-cycles I present throughout this article: I start them where I can grasp them. I did not discuss with the performers (those I recorded myself) where they felt the repeating patterns began. Thus what I show as a grouping in the order \( a+b+c \), they might feel as starting with \( b \) or with \( c \).

\(^{59}\) In Javanese music, these units are called \textit{gatra}. “The gatra is the smallest melodic/rhythmic unit of a \textit{gendhing} [gamelan composition], consisting of four \textit{balungan} [skeletal melody] beats” (Supanggah 2011:176).

\(^{60}\) The three videos from Timor discussed in this paragraph are, in order: \textit{T4} disc 3, “Tebe Dai Tilomar” (19-beat melody), \textit{T4} disc 2, “Tebe Dai Lian Midiki,” second song (22-beat melody), and \textit{T4} disc 2, “Tebe Dai Loi Nona,” (32- or 36-beat melody). Dana Rappoport (p. c., 2015)
In a video of a bekut dance in Lembata,\textsuperscript{61} the vocal does not have a fixed period: the chorus is always 28 beats, but the solo can be of variable length. The dance step, on the other hand, is exactly six beats long. In the video excerpt, successive statements of the chorus can be seen to start at three different positions in the six-beat dance cycle.

In all of these instances, the dance cycle and the melodic cycle share the same pulse or beat, but the metric cycles are out of phase. A more extreme form of discoordination shows no correlation between the melodic cycle and an external beat (as provided either by the dance step or by an instrument). This type does not, so far as I know, exist in NTT/TL, but it is found in a few spots elsewhere in Insulindia. There is an apparent example from South Kalimantan; a clear one from Sabah (Malaysian Borneo); and I encountered it observes that “Nama Nigi” in eastern Flores (F4 tr 11) is called “the difficult dance” because it too has a dance step out of phase with the sung melody.

\textsuperscript{61} Lembata: unpublished video by Dana Rappoport, made in Ds. Balurebong on 1 July 2007.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
& period & phrase breakdown & source \\
\hline
TIMOR & 16 & 10+10 (2 beats overlap at end each phrase) & T3 item _002_03 \\
& 16 & 6+3+7 & T6 tr 17 \\
& 18 & 8+10 & T4 disc 2, “Lian Midiki,” 1st song \\
& 18 & 8+10 & T9 tr 5 \\
& 19 & 5+5+5+4 & NT5 tr 10; triple subdiv of beats \\
& 19 & 9+11 (1 beat overlap) & T4 disc 3, “Tebe dai Tilomar” \\
& 20 & 10+10 & NT5 tr 11 (figure 3, this article) \\
& 20 & 11+11 (1 beat overlap at end each phrase) & T3 item _001_02 \\
& 22 & 10+12 & T4 disc 2, “Lian Midiki,” 2d song \\
& 23 & 12+1 beat rest+10 & T9 tr 4 \\
& 32 & 13+14+5 or 13+12+7 & T6 tr 16; triple subdiv of beats \\
& & & (transcription in Yampolsky 2001b: 182) \\
FLORES & 12 & 7+6 (1 beat overlap) & F1a item _003_07 \\
& 14 & 7+8 (1 beat overlap) & F1a item _003_07 \\
& 18 & 8+11 (1 beat overlap) & F2 tr 16 \\
& 19 & 4+15 & F4 tr 18 \\
& 20 & 10+10 & F1a item _003_07 \\
& 22 & 14+10 (2 beats overlap) & F1a item _003_07 \\
& 39 (or 42?) & 14+14+11 with indefinite hold (=14?) & F1b item _001_050 \\
PANTAR & 27 & 15+14 (2 beats overlap) & NT2 “Del Horang” \\
NORTH SULAWESI & 29 & 9+9+3+4+4 & SL3 tr 12 [mazani] \\
NIAS & 30 & 8+9+6+4+3 & SM5 tr 6 >2:15; triple subdiv \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Non-four cycles.}
\end{table}
when recording ngel-ngel songs in Kei (Maluku). A group of women sang a solo-chorus song, and one of the women played a pattern on a hand drum, with no metrical connection to the singing. The woman seemed to be drumming at random, as though half asleep. I feared she was simply unable to keep a beat and the other women were unwilling to embarrass her by taking the drum away. But when I played back the recording the next day for the singers and offered to record again if they weren’t satisfied, they said there was nothing wrong, no reason to do a retake. Later I found that the Catholic missionary Geurtjens had noted seventy years earlier that the drumming for ngel-ngel was unpredictable: there might be a pause of nearly half a minute between one pair of drumstrokes and the next (Geurtjens 1921: 397).

Although New Guinea is officially outside the purview of this article, I will mention that I also encountered some discoordination of drumming and singing in Biak, and Wolfgang Laade noted it in badra songs on the south coast of mainland Papua New Guinea. Regarding this as a desired effect in the music, he describes it as “a real ‘swing’... created by the drum beat being slightly faster than the metre of the song. In [one] instance 26 drum beats stand against 20 of the song, in [another] 28 against 20.”

Simultaneous seconds. I have already mentioned singing in seconds in NTT/TL—in the Nage/Ngada choral music and the East Flores and East Timor duets—and again in Sulawesi among Toraja. Seconds are also found in West Kalimantan, in the timang of the Ot Danum, where they are heard as a harmony to only one pitch. We saw a similarly systematic application of the second as a harmony in Tanimbar (Fig. 4), as well as a seventh (the second’s inversion) in mazani (North Sulawesi; Fig. 3). In other instances (central Flores, Toraja) the second seems to be less rigorously applied but to represent a desired, sought-after sonority.

One does not find simultaneous seconds in Java or Bali—nor, typically, in Sumatra, though there is one surprising exception in a salawat dulang recording. Aside from this instance, I have not found seconds in Sumatra.

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62. The three examples in this sentence are, in order: B2 tr 2 (Meratus Mountains, South Kalimantan); B5 tr B1 (Murut, Sabah); M4 tr 13 (ngel-ngel, Kei Besar).

63. Neither form of discoordination is found, apparently, in Java, Bali, and Sumatra. In a gamelan or other percussion ensemble, where precision and synchrony are central values, straying from the prevailing pulse or going out of phase with other instruments would be a glaring error and bring shame on the performer—except in the cases where a melodic line (e.g., that of the female singer, the flute, and sometimes the rebab in Central Javanese gamelan) is meant to be in free meter as a contrast to the fixed meter of the other instruments.

64. Album notes to PNG2. The instances Laade speaks of are heard in PNG2 trs A11 and A12, respectively. Cf. P1 tr 11 from Biak, which may be another, less extreme instance.

65. For my purposes here I will define a second as any interval significantly larger than a unison and smaller than a minor third—thus, say, above 80 and below 240 cents.

66. B7 trs 17–24 (timang, Ot Danum).

67. SM2 disc 1 tr 18 (salawat dulang, Minangkabau). In this recording, two singers sing the same
Tritones. In the 1930s, Jaap Kunst observed that in two widely separated areas, the Lio region of central Flores and the southern part of Nias, there were melodies exhibiting what he called the “tritone melos”—that is, their scales permitted melodic emphasis of the interval of the tritone (an interval of six semitones, for example C to F♯). Moreover, in both places these tritone melodies were sung in triple meter or ternary subdivision. On the basis of ethnographic similarities between these two cultures and a third, that of the Angami Naga in Northeast India, who also had (according to a musical transcription by Marius Schneider) tritones and triple meter in the same song, Kunst proposed that the inhabitants of all three regions were “bearers of a megalithic culture, which has remained alive to this day.” In view of all this, he wrote, “I am inclined to assume hypothetically that the tritone-melodies combined with a ternary rhythm are characteristic of the megalithic culture.”

Tritone melodies do indeed still exist in Nias and Lio, and so does triple meter, and they do sometimes occur in the same song, but they can also occur independent of each other. Tritone melodies are also encountered in Ataúro, in Manggarai, and in Sumba (another place of large stones)—but those examples are in duple meter or free meter, not in triple.

Kunst was a great scholar, the first musicologist with the vision to take on Indonesia as a whole, but I believe he was overly fond of the notion of musical survivals over millennia—not only this megalithic one, but also his famous hypothesis (1960 [1954]) of a historical link between eastern Flores and the Balkans. Nevertheless, despite the dubious historical proposals, the
correspondence between Nias and NTT/TL—like that between the duets in eastern Flores (and Timor-Leste, which he did not know about) and Bulgaria—is striking. Tritone melodies are rare outside of NTT/TL, until one comes to Nias in the far west; non-four structures drop out after Sulawesi and resurface in Nias; descant drops out even sooner (Alor) but reemerges in Nias, and triple meter is more prominent in Nias than anywhere else outside of NTT/TL.

**Percussion Ensembles**

*Gong-chime ensembles.* I have argued elsewhere that an analytical distinction should be made between *gamelan* and other types of gong-chime ensembles. The term *gamelan*, I propose, should be reserved (analytically—I am not trying to intervene in popular speech, which calls any ensemble with a gong or a metallophone a gamelan) for the orchestras of Java and Bali that have (a) melodic metallophones (whether with keys or kettles), (b) punctuating gongs or their substitutes, and (c) at least two simultaneous melodic lines, related in content but of contrasting musical character. The relation between the melodic lines may be, e.g., one of abstraction, or paraphrase, or elaboration. Such orchestras have developed large and structurally variegated repertories, along with extensive technical and analytical vocabularies. It is therefore appropriate to distinguish them terminologically from other ensembles that share their gongs but few or none of their other traits. The term *gamelan* comes instantly to mind for the former group. But if they are gamelan, then the others are something else, namely (I suggest) gong ensembles.

The vast category of (non-gamelan) gong ensembles in Insulindia can be broken down into two principal subcategories. Some present a melody up front, usually played on a row of small gong-kettles and rhythmically supported by drums and other, larger gongs. (Some ensembles use a set of hanging gongs, instead of a gong-row, for the foregrounded melody.) These may be termed “melodic” ensembles, and outside NTT/TL they predominate. They are, however, rare in NTT/TL. Instead one finds gong ensembles of the

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71. SL1 tr 20 is a Toraja flute melody using the tritone.
72. The ideas and some of the wording in this paragraph are borrowed from Yampolsky 2001a, and in the next paragraph from my album notes to NT5. For a detailed presentation of the argument concerning gamelan and gong ensembles, see the album notes to IN7 and the supplementary note posted at http://media.smithsonianfolkways.org/liner_notes/smithsonian_folkways/SFW40441.pdf.
73. These are found in several parts of northern and eastern Borneo, and also in Lembata.
74. Indeed, the gamelan of Java and Bali and their outposts in South Kalimantan, southern Sumatra, and Lombok are highly elaborated forms of melodic gong ensembles, with the melodic role assignable to instruments other than the gong-row.
75. F1b items _001_104, from Lembata, and _001_357, from eastern Flores, are exceptions. T6 tr 4 may be another, or it may be better classed as an in-between form. It is not clearly described in the album notes, but it sounds as though it is six kettle-gongs laid in a rack, plus drums. One player plays a melody on the three lower-pitched gongs, and another plays an ostinato
other type, which I call (for want of a better term) “rhythmic” ensembles, and these are, conversely, rare (though not unknown) outside NTT/TL. Rhythmic ensembles play composite repeating patterns that are as much rhythmic as melodic, with little sense of contrast between foreground and background or between melody and support. Typically, from five to ten bossed gongs are distributed among several players, so that each player controls one, two, or three gongs. The gongs may be suspended from a cross-bar or held by the player; if the gongs are small and light a player may hold two in one hand and strike them with a stick held in the other hand. The texture of the ensembles ranges from homorhythmic to contrapuntal. Many of the NTT/TL ensembles tend toward the contrapuntal: each player, using the tones of his or her few gongs, contributes a rhythmic-melodic ostinato that interlocks and overlaps with the patterns of the others. Some of the players may make variations or improvisations on their patterns. In Maluku and Borneo, where rhythmic ensembles are less widespread, there seems to be a tendency toward homorhythm, one part subdividing the rhythm of another or matching the rhythm but playing different pitches. The *talempong pacik* non-melodic ensembles in West Sumatra are again contrapuntal.

The Balinese *bebonangan* or *balaganjur* resembles a rhythmic ensemble, since it uses hocket and hand-held gongs, but there is no variation in the parts, and the interlocking lines produce a single, foregrounded melody.

Melodic gong ensembles are far more common outside NTT/TL than within. They are found (sometimes along with rhythmic ensembles) in Maluku, North Sulawesi, East and West Kalimantan, North Borneo (Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei), all of southern and western Sumatra, island Riau, Java, and Bali. They range from ensembles like that of the Pompaŋ in West Kalimantan, featuring a melody of only two tones, to extended melodies played on horizontal (or, rarely, vertical) gong-rows, with punctuating gongs and drums.

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76. The gongs may also be laid in a rack, thus resembling the gong row of melodic gong ensembles. However, if one player controls only a few of the gongs while another player controls another few, as in NT4 tr 1, and there is no foregrounded melody, an ensemble with gongs in a row may still be considered non-melodic.

77. Timor: NT5 tr 7 and T8 trs 2, 4, 5, 14 (Meto); T6 tr 9 (Tetun?); T8 trs 9, 10 (Amarasi); T8 tr 18 (Helong in Semau). Rote: NT1 trs 3, 4, 7, 8 and NT4 tr 1, 8, 10. Flores: F5 trs 4, 6, 8, and F6 tr 4 (Sikka). Lembata: F1b item _001_108. Alor: NT3 trs 14, 15. Sumba: NT5 trs 5, 6.

78. North Maluku: M2 disc 2, trs 15, 16 (cikamomo from Ternate). Borneo: B4 tr II-2 (Modang, East Kalimantan) and B5 tr B 6 (Murut, Sabah).

79. SM8 trs 1, 2 (*talempong pacik* Minangkabau, West Sumatra). *Pacik* means “hand-held.”

80. IN2 tr 1, 2 (Bali).

81. IN6 vol 2 tr 26 (mislabeled 27 in booklet and track list, Gonaln Sirat, Pompaŋ).

82. Maluku and North Maluku: M2 disc 1, tr 20 and IN4 tr 14 (Ambon), IN4 tr 13 (Banda), M4 tr 7 (Buru). Sulawesi: SL3 trs 7, 8 (Mongondow). Borneo: B1 item _002_06 (Taman), B2 trs 5,
Female performers. The players of rhythmic gong-and-drum ensembles in Timor (aside from the meko ensembles found among Rotenese) are women, and there is also a widespread dance in Timor called likurai or teberai, in which women dance while playing small drums. This association of women with percussion instruments seems to be stronger in Timor than elsewhere in NTT/TL, though it is found in some ensembles in Flores. It also appears in scattered locations in other parts of Insulindia. Women commonly play gong rows and hanging gongs in Sarawak and Sabah (Patricia Matusky, p. c., 2015), and Mallinckrodt reported (1925:173) that women in South Kalimantan played the katabong drum, but men played gongs. Margaret Kartomi (1994: 169) reports that in Tanimbar (Maluku) women are the exclusive players of the tibal drum. (A different drum is played exclusively by men.) Among Minangkabau there are all-female groups playing the rhythmic gong ensemble talempong pacik, this may be a recent development, but in the mountain community of Unggan women traditionally play all the instruments in a melodic gong ensemble (also called talempong). I have seen a woman playing a gong row in the Natuna islands off western Sarawak, and (again I have to step outside the boundaries of this article) women often play melodic gong rows in the southern Philippines, accompanied by male supporters on other instruments.

Apart from NTT/TL and the isolated instances elsewhere, women have very little presence in traditional percussion ensembles in Insulindia, except as singers. In the past, women did commonly play the gender, an important keyed metallophone in the Javanese gamelan that accompanies wayang kulit shadow-play performances, but this role has been largely taken over by men since the mid-twentieth century (Weiss 2007).

Summary and Conclusion

Fig. 10 summarizes the observations in the previous sections. It is, I remind the reader, an interim summary: new information may emerge tomorrow to fill

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6, 10 and B7 trs 13, 14, 15 (Benuaq); B2 tr 17 (Tunjung); B7 trs 2, 3, 4 (Upper Jelai); B7 tr 9 and IN6 vol 2 tr 26 (Pampaking). B7 tr 16 (Dusun Deyah), Sumatra: SM8 trs 3, 4 (Minangkabau). SM8 trs 8–11 (Melinting, Lampung); IN6 vol 2 tr 15 (Jambi); IN6 vol 2 tr 12 and vol 3 tr 11 (Rejang Lebong, Bengkulu). Melodic gong ensembles in South Sumatra are discussed by Kartomi (2012: chapter 7, with online audio), and I have heard them in Natuna (Kepulauan Riau). In Java, most ensembles are full gamelan, but the three famous archaic or ceremonial ensembles, Monggeng, Kodhok Ngorek and Carabalen (IN3 trs 1, 2, 3, and IN5 trs 3, 4, 5), are all, in my analytical scheme, melodic gong ensembles rather than gamelan, and this is also the case for Balinese balaganjur (IN2 trs 1, 2), as explained above.

83. F2 tr 14 and F1a item _004_02 (Manggarai); F1b item _001_357 (eastern Flores).

84. SM8 trs 2 (talempong pacik), SM8 trs 3, 4 (talempong Unggan).

85. There are all- or mostly female gamelan groups in Central Java and Bali (gamelan ibu-ibu), but these became widespread only in the second half of the twentieth century and do not reflect the traditional social organization of gamelan, whereas the female role in percussion ensembles in the places I have cited in this paragraph (other than Java and Bali and perhaps talempong pacik) seems to be longstanding.
Nevertheless, for all its interim character, the chart bears out the statement I made near the start: that the anomalous features of the music of NTT/TL, the features that seem distinctive, are for the most part not unique to that region—but on the other hand they exist nowhere else in such concentration. As you travel west from “NTT/TL Overall,” in the middle of the chart, towards Nias and Mentawai at the far edge of Insulindia, the features thin out. Moreover, one sees a sort of musical Wallace Line, running on a sinuous diagonal between Sumbawa and NTT in the south and between Borneo and Sumatra in the north. This line suggests to me that a broader definition of “eastern Insulindia” would include everything to the east of that line. It would still be clear that NTT/TL has a higher concentration of anomalous features (or, better, of these anomalous features) than Maluku, Sulawesi, and Borneo, but the broader definition would highlight the sudden dropping away of so many features as soon as one crosses the Music Line.

But then there is what Roger Blench (2012) calls “the strange case of Nias.” He is referring to haplogroups, but the musical case is just as strange. Traits that are strong in NTT/TL dwindle as we move west, but then they resurface in Nias (and, to a lesser extent, on the West Sumatran mainland). If we reject Kunst’s megalithic hypothesis, what are we left with—indeed, what explains the sputtering, scattered distribution of so many of the NTT/TL traits outside NTT? These traits may constitute an “NTT/TL complex”—we would need more examples from Savu, Rote, Alor, Pantar, and Sumba to confirm this—but they do not form a complex west of NTT.

A plausible hypothesis is that many of these traits were once widespread all across Insulindia, but died out in the highly populated regions of central and western Insulindia, extinguished, on the one hand, by the spread of the “gamelan and wayang” complex, and on the other by the unifying and standardizing force of Islam. The traits, then, survive only at the margins (Nettl 1957), where Java/Bali and Islam did not reach. But still, if they were once widespread, why are they now so concentrated in NTT—why are there not more NTT traits in Sulawesi or Maluku or Borneo? Is it simply that NTT/TL was more marginal than other areas, less accessible to Java/Bali and Islam? (Surely not more marginal than the small islands of southern and eastern Maluku.)

Another possibility is that the anomalous traits of NTT/TL result from the proximity of the region to New Guinea and the cultures farther to the east.

86. It is striking that the long line of gong-chime ensembles running from the mainland down to Sumatra and eastward through the archipelago stops short at the Atoni Pah Meto in western (Indonesian) Timor. The Meto have leki sene, five or six suspended gongs and a drum (NTS tr 7), but aside from the westernmost groups of Tetun-speakers in Indonesia, who live right next to the Meto, none of the Timorese peoples east of the Meto have gong chimes. At most they have a single gong (Tetun: tala) that plays in rhythmic unison with a monorhythmic drum ensemble (as in the likurai or tebedae dance). This abrupt halt to the line of gong chimes
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Perhaps NTT/TL’s music represents a confluence of Papuan and Austronesian traits. But then we would expect a higher incidence of those traits in the islands of southern and eastern Maluku, equally susceptible to influence from New Guinea.

To test either of the above notions, we need more documentation, not only of NTT/TL but also of Maluku. That is one reason why I call this an interim

suggests a musical fault line in central Timor, where Austronesian and non-Austronesian music cultures meet.

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**Fig. 10 – Summary of musical features discussed here, with their distribution across Insulindia.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Timor</th>
<th>Flores*</th>
<th>Aor, Pantar</th>
<th>Sumbawa</th>
<th>Sumbawa, Lombok</th>
<th>Maluku**</th>
<th>Sulaesi</th>
<th>Borneo</th>
<th>Riau Islands</th>
<th>Bali</th>
<th>Java, Madura</th>
<th>Sumbawa, Lombok</th>
<th>Maluku, North Maluku</th>
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*including Solor, Adonara, & Lembata.  **including the provinces of Maluku & North Maluku.

KEY: ■ = substantial number of examples encountered / ■ = few examples encountered so far
report. Indeed, the whole study is partial, because it looks only westward from NTT/TL. To understand NTT/TL’s true status—to understand whether it is truly anomalous, and anomalous in reference to what—we need to study the traits I have identified here in a much wider frame, to see them vis-à-vis the Philippines, New Guinea, Oceania, Taiwan, and the Asian mainland.

Acknowledgments.

I am very grateful to Dana Rappoport, Michael Tenzer, and Simha Arom for their insightful comments, suggestions, and additions. Aaron Pettigrew contributed the transcription for Fig. 5 and offered a counter-analysis of the meter of Wera Sarajawa (Fig. 7) that I accepted; he also patiently allowed me to bounce several ideas and phrasings off him. Many other friends and colleagues have answered questions and provided information and field recordings for this article. I wish to thank Marc Benamou, Donna Buchanan, James T. Collins, Barry Drummond, Gini Gorlinski, Gary Holton, Webb Keane, Ellen Koskoff, Joel Kuipers, Patricia Matusky, Bruno Nettl, Marc Perlman, Timothy Rice, Joséphine Simonnot, Victor A. Stoichită, Andrew Weintraub, and Sean Williams. The thanks are theirs, the mistakes are mine.
Is Eastern Insulindia a Distinct Musical Area?

Map 1 – Indonesian Archipelago and neighboring countries. (Infography: © L. Billault, IRD)

Map 2 – NTT/TL: Nusa Tenggara Timur (Indonesia) and Timor-Leste. Wetar is located in Maluku, not NTT. (Infography: © L. Billault, IRD)
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Is Eastern Insulindia a Distinct Musical Area?


DISCOGRAPHY

**Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) and Timor-Leste (TL)**

**Timor**


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**Flores, Solor, Adonara, Lembata**

F1. Centre de Recherche en Ethnomusulogie (Nanterre).


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**Other NTT**


NT2. Unpublished West Pantar videos (*Soli-Mele Lego-lego* and *Del Horang*) and audio (*Bunni Maggar 1 & 2*), recorded by Gary Holton. These will be posted on the website of The Language Archive in Nijmegen, in the collection “Holton_Western_Pantar”: http://hdl.handle.net/1839/00-0000-0000-001E-2AFE-B@view
Is Eastern Insulindia a Distinct Musical Area?


Other Insulindia & New Guinea

Maluku


Sulawesi


Borneo


Archipel 90, Paris, 2015


**Sumatra**


**Other Indonesia (including multi-regional anthologies)**


IN3. *Music of Islamic Festival, Solo.* CD. King KICW 85164. Recorded in Surakarta by


### Indonesian Papua & Papua New Guinea


