



MUSIC

Rock 'n Resist

Protest music is not dead.



BY HANNA SORBITO

In the time of post-Martial Law sentiments, red-tagging, and a populist president, protest music continues to shake walls and break perspectives.

Peaking during the era of Martial Law in the Philippines, political resistance and demonstrations are usually paired up with the jams. Aside from leading chants on the streets as the people overthrow a reigning dictator in the 70s, the ending of martial law was accentuated with various art forms like underground plays, poetry, and songs—all in an attempt to voice out suppressed cries for freedom.

In this day and age when we're not alien to police cruelty, corrupt institutions, and mind-racking political conversations on the Internet, who writes the songs of freedom and redemption for the Filipinos?

Buklod

Before Noel Cabangon was known as a solo artist with songs like “Kanlungan” and “Ang Himig Natin,” he started as a member of the trio Buklod, together with Rom Dongeto and Rene Boncocan, who wielded the power of their music against the dictatorship. Till now, the band is active in creating songs to remember the horrors and victories in one of the darkest chapters in Philippine history. The release of their album “Tatlong Dekada: Buklod, Ang Muling Pag-Awit” early this year

proved that protest music transcends multiple generations and is meant to awaken the deep roots of nationalism.

Datu's Tribe

Known for the uncanny lyrics in their songs, Datu's Tribe is a total experience. “Hindi kami makapag-pagamot. Kami tuloy napapakamot. Sa papeles, kay dami niyong inaabot pero pagdating sa amin kakapiranggot!” In their song “Utang na Naman,” Datu's Tribe fearlessly paints a reality of the Philippine society through politically-charged and taunting verses. Known for being a supporter of progressive groups, the band exists as an instrument of change, sharing the stories of the minorities through their music and provoking their listeners to think about and act upon these realities.

Sandata

Art and politics? Always a good mix. For the collective Sandata, this combo is even made perfect with facts. The group recently released an album on Duterte's war on drugs. But it's not just all about creating noise. Given that they have succeeded in creating poignant and visual lyrics based on interviews with real-life victims of the drug war, what sets them apart is their bigger vision of creating consciousness and speaking out for the people. Since the release, they have set

their US tour and spoke about their art on universities such as Harvard and UC Berkeley.

Plagpul

“Never again. Never forget.” is a mantra that keeps Plagpul's blood curdle as progressive musicians. Often humorous and provocative, their songs are flavored with a modern take on the social issues that we continue to face today. Their song “Apo-Apologist” talks about their encounters with young and avid Marcos fans who front Internet-powered arguments and memes. This frame of reference pulls a younger audience towards their music, giving them a fresh perspective on appreciating protest music and being socially-relevant.

BLKD

The Fliptop battle arena takes on a politically-relevant form with BLKD spewing unapologetic verses. His exposure to the plight of the masses has inspired him to create music that matters. His first album, “Gatilyo,” was a statement on its own, featuring nine tracks that talked about the harsh realities of living poor in the Philippines. What started out as a spectacle turned out to be an avenue of activism for him, proof that protest music breeds on spaces where it is inspired. **✎**