7. Creativity and preservation

The previous three chapters have been concerned with illuminating the continuity of theme, text and function between Duna songs of ancestral and foreign origin, or the endogenous and the exogenous. This chapter will be concerned first with the creative process itself, as it applies to Duna song creation. Both ancestral and introduced song styles display a similar approach to composition, in particular the recycling of melodic material in songs of the same genre, and this compositional process can be seen as another form of continuity. This in turn reveals continuity in what is regarded as a key element of Duna song form: textual innovation. Consequences of this creative approach for the preservation endeavour are considered, before the chapter then turns to the views of the Duna themselves on the maintenance of their own traditions and some of the ways in which they have sought to do this.1

Continuity in creativity: ‘traim na wokim tasol’

The process of creativity is epitomised in the words of one popular song, ‘traim na wokim tasol’ (‘just try and do it’), cited above.2 One must acknowledge, however, that creativity does not start from nothing. Liep (2001:1) describes creativity as something that ‘bursts forth when elements, which were already known but apart, are brought together by inventive people in a novel way’. He goes on to define it as the process whereby ‘something new is produced through the recombination and transformation of existing cultural practices or forms’ (Liep 2001:2) and declares that ‘[e]very creative effort must emanate from familiar forms and methods of production’ (p. 6). As such, structural resources are in place in any creative endeavour and Duna song is no exception. Subscription to melodic and textual conventions can be considered the primary requirement for successful song creation for the Duna. I now address those conventions that are shared across the spectrum of Duna musical practice.

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1 This chapter presents the views of Duna men only; the opinions of Duna women on the creativity and preservation of their musical practices appear to be far less frequently voiced.

2 Jebens (1997:43) also draws on the Tok Pisin expression ‘traim tasol’ (‘just try it’) to describe the ‘traditional and continuing readiness to experiment with innovation’ in regards to religion in one community of the Southern Highlands Province.
Regarding the creative process it is important to remember what was stated in Chapter 2: for the Duna, the creation of songs is an egalitarian process. Also, the roles of performer and composer are intertwined, resembling the ‘singer-songwriter’ figure in popular Western music. As set out in Chapter 2, distinctive melodies exist for distinct Duna ancestral genres. This is how the genres, and in turn their functions, are identified. The same can be said of introduced styles of song. Many songs are based closely on the melodic format of the Christian revivalist song style and this melodic format has been circulating among the Duna at least but most likely also beyond for several decades with little change. This can be seen when Pugh-Kitingan’s notation of a performance of Ngodegana ipa gana, recorded in 1975 and reproduced in Chapter 3 (Example 3.3), is compared with my own notation of ‘nane laip senis nganda waya keina’ (Example 3.4). Any melodic change in the recycling of the Christian revivalist song format is likely to have resulted from the different textual settings applied to that melody—for example, the addition of repeated notes to account for additional syllables (which is the case for the latter of the above two examples). It is clear that the recycling of distinct melodic formulas is integral to the creation of Duna ancestral songs and this practice continues in the creation of songs in introduced styles.

If melodic material in Duna song is generally formulaic then innovation must occur in another aspect of song composition. As suggested above, this occurs in the aspect of text. The creation of poetic texts is held in high esteem across Papua New Guinea (see Schieffelin 1976; Feld 1982; Weiner 1991; Rumsey 2006b). Although the quality of this poetic invention might be variable, for the Duna, textual innovation can be seen across song styles due to the fixity of melodic features of the songs. This invention is, however, guided by convention and, perhaps not surprisingly, the same conventions guide both pre-contact and post-contact song forms. These primary conventions are word substitution and the repetition and the parallelism in which this results.

In both solo and group ancestral performances, textual lines are repeated several times. This often occurs through the process of ipakana yakaya (explained in Chapter 2), which by definition is concerned with the listing of various landscape features using their kēiyaka. This occurs in a textual (and melodic) frame, whereby each kēiyaka (usually heading the line) is substituted by another on repetition of the frame. Thus a kind of textual parallelism occurs.

Such a feature is also apparent in newer Duna song styles, whether or not the word (or phrase) substituted is a kēiyaka. For example, consider the song text of the standard Christian song type showcased in Chapter 3:

\[
\text{nane laip senis nganda waya keina}
\]
\[
\text{imane laip senis nganda waya keina}
\]
In this example the first word of each line is different, as in the typical *ipakana yakaya* process of ancestral music, while the rest of the line (which I referred to earlier as the textual frame) remains the same. A similar textual construction showing word substitution in the first line and also resulting in parallelism is apparent in the many ‘Memba *pi nakaya*’ songs of Chapter 3:

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memba pi nakaya
haiwe pi naraya
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Because of the high value placed on textual innovation, songs constantly change, though textual phrases and motifs are sometimes reused (this is discussed in a later section on authorship and ownership). Melodic material, though flexible to a point in accommodating new texts, remains in contrast relatively static.

Until this point, the musical systems of ancestral and introduced music have been considered as separate entities. This is primarily because of the separate origins of these systems. We might now consider whether there is a continuity of musical sound also present.

**Musical similarities between the endogenous and exogenous**

The most effective way to consider a possible continuity in musical sound is to map the musical systems onto each other and observe where the elements coincide. It has already been established that Duna ancestral song (and instrumental music) is largely non-metric. What similarities there are, then, would be revealed in the area of pitch.

We have seen that the tonal centre and pitches of a tone and two tones above it are important in Duna ancestral genres—for example, *yekia* (see Example 2.5). These pitches correspond to the whole tones of the Western diatonic tradition; they could be conceived of as being the same as the first three degrees of a major scale. The employment of a semitone below the tonal centre in such genres as *khene ipakana* and *pikono* is also suggestive of the Western musical system, as it corresponds to the ‘leading note’ or seventh degree of a scale, which is raised from a tone to a semitone below the tonal centre. This similarity is indirectly identified by Pugh-Kitingan (1981:362) in her cipher notation, which depicts this pitch as ‘7’ and also occasionally ‘7b’ (to indicate a whole tone below the tonal centre or what would be known in the Western tonal tradition as a flat seventh), with a dot under both occurrences to indicate its belonging to the octave below.
In the Duna composition of Western songs, however, this seventh degree is rarely utilised—nor is the fourth degree of the major scale. This is pertinent; it is the quality of these two tones that partly defines the conventions of the Western diatonic system. In the Duna songs composed in the Western musical system, particularly those songs in the style of the Christian revival songs, the pitches most common are the tonal centre, a tone above it, two tones above it (a third), three and a half tones above it (a fifth) and four and a half tones above it (a sixth). This can be seen clearly in Example 3.3. Thus, the ‘new’ Duna system can be seen to correspond with the common pentatonic scale, as Pugh-Kitingan (1981:291) also identifies when describing the Huli revival songs.

Although the pentatonic scale should not be seen as the foundation of Duna ancestral music, the first three pitches of it, as mentioned above, feature heavily in that system. The higher pitches (and larger intervals) can also be said to feature in some ancestral genres; often the beginning of pikono phrases utilises these degrees; also the tone and a half below the tonal centre of the selepa melodic contour (see Chapter 2, Example 2.4) correlates to the sixth degree of a major scale.

The pitches employed by the Duna in their singing of ancestral genres of music are therefore comparable with those pitches utilised by the Western diatonic system. Such observations in musical ‘continuity’ are not so much examples of either of these two musical systems shifting to encompass the other as an example of where the systems might meet—what they might share in terms of melodic convention. These similarities do more to explain the Duna’s ultimate acceptance of a new musical system (as described by Pastor Hagini in Chapter 3) than to explain any organic adaptation of one system to another. Therefore, in my argument, the similarity of musical systems is necessary to contemplate but in reality plays little role in an overall musical continuity. What is most important to note regarding continuity on the compositional level in terms of musical elements (aside from text) is, as described above, the recycling of melodic material within all genres of Duna song.

**Authorship and ownership**

Earlier I argued that textual innovation was a highly valued aspect of Duna song creation across time, but that it was also common for certain phrases or motifs to be reused. This raises the question of song authorship and, by extension, song ownership.
Toynbee (2003:104) writes: ‘Authorship, in all forms of culture including music, is of a profoundly social nature.’ For Duna song, this is particularly and temporally so. The moment of authorship of a Duna song, for the majority of songs of ancestral and foreign origins, occurs at the moment of performance; songs in their final form are seldom rehearsed beforehand. And the moment of performance is a social event; most songs are performed not individually but as a group and in a particular social context such as grieving, courting or celebrating.

For the Duna, songs are often described with reference to particular performances or, more specifically, performers. This is essentially because of the level of textual innovation apparent. Kenny Kendoli recently described his favourite pikono stories in terms of the performers who told them (it is important to remember here that pikono is the only ancestral Duna song genre intended to be performed solo):

I have three pikono favourites. One is a pikono man named Urungawe Pukani, in a performance of Kiliya’s, another is Amina Kelo, in a performance of Luke Ranga from Yokona…

They’re favourites of mine. I really like them and these two are the ones that I really enjoy. Another one is Yeripi Pake, well there are a lot of stories about Yeripi Pake but one story is that a woman took him to the cannibal areas to fight. This was a story told by Teya. (Kendoli [translated by Lila San Roque] forthcoming)

Duna songs rarely exist as static works reiterated without variation. This applies to Duna song genres across the board and ties closely with the value of textual innovation in songs. Although some genres, such as yekia, utilise common imagery and textual features, they also allow for the creation of new poetic features. Singers who create successful variations become known as particularly effective performers and these variations can be attributed to their name until they are eventually incorporated by others into future performances, thereby becoming standard features themselves.

The Duna understand that once a song has been performed, the format is available to others to use. Still, the changes that are made are not always viewed as favourable by the original author (when that author can be identified). In the following interview excerpt, Richard Alo expresses his dissatisfaction.

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4 Stewart and Strathern (2002b:41) describe a pikono plot with a character named Irimi Pake, who they identify as being the same as Yerepi Pake. There are also other pikono characters with names that begin with 'Yerepi-' (see Stewart and Strathern 2002b:42–4, 2005:94).
with a version of a guitar-based church song that he had composed in the local Apostolic Church at Kopiago, and which I had recorded in 2005 being sung by a group of Duna women in Mount Hagen:

Em ol kisim nau, sampela long namel long song bilong mi, ol kirap na rausim na ol putim nupela toktok bilong ol i kam na go insait…Dispela [nupela tok] em mi no putim long en, ol putim i kam igo insait…Mi no save wanem lotu o wanem manmeri putim i kam igo insait, mi no save…Mi ino gat hamamas long dispela.


[They all took it, and some of the middle of my song, they got rid of that and they put their own new words in…This (new text) I didn’t put there, they put it in…I don’t know what church or what people put it inside, I don’t know…I’m not happy with it.

I’ve got plenty of songs of mine (used) in the Apostolic church. All the people sing them around the place…We (young boys) would hold the guitars and sing. So all the people would get them (the songs) in their heads and, when you play this song (recording) of yours, you will hear all the women mix up the song—anoter will get up and arrange another word, and another will do it her way, because they all aren’t clear of how we composed the song. They don’t remember it well and they all play it and do that. So at the start they all sing it the way I sang it. In the middle they forget it…their own style comes inside…This (new text) I didn’t put in it, they all got it wrong the song that I composed…I’m not in agreement with this song.] (Richard Alo, Interview, 2 July 2006)

Richard’s words show a number of aspects of song transmission and composition. Richard suggests indirectly that the song that he composed should be sung the way he originally composed it; however, he can only express his dissatisfaction with the new product; he is unable to control the use of his song in any way (it is unclear though whether he is unhappy with that fact it has changed at
all or whether it is the new text that he specifically dislikes). Richard outlines how songs (specifically in the church performance context) are committed to memory by the congregation and sung outside the original performance context by many (at one point in the interview he commented that the textual changes in the women’s performance of his song were lacking in religious praise). Importantly, he comments (and extensively throughout the interview, singing the two versions more than once) only on the textual change of the song; he does not comment in any way on the melodic material or vocal style of presentation. The focus, then, is on textual innovation. Finally, the real composer of this song fluctuates in Richard’s account from being himself (‘mi’) to the group of boys with which he first performed the song (‘mipela’) and then back to himself again. Thus, again it can be seen that authorship of a song cannot be removed from the first performance of it; authorship essentially establishes itself in the performance of the song, rather than in a prepared product.

From the above we see that some sense of authorship can be claimed for Duna songs; however, ownership of these creative moments as such is not asserted. This lack of ownership rules is in marked contrast with other parts of Melanesia. For example, Ammann (2004) reveals that a very high level of importance is placed on song ownership for the Tanna people of Vanuatu. In other areas of Papua New Guinea, such as Kanjime (located geographically and culturally between the Sepik region and the Highlands), there are strict rules of song ownership, in which songs can be purchased from the composer and compensation must be paid for the misappropriation of songs (Darja Hoenigman, Personal communication, 11 September 2006).

Suwa, in his study of the music of communities in the Madang district of Papua New Guinea, suggests that ownership of songs can come about as a result of efforts in song preservation. He (2001b:92) writes that after the colonisation of the Madang area ‘the significance of singsing tumbuna was transformed’ and ‘[a]n old dance, which might previously have been exchanged throughout the region, subsequently became a cultural property for one community’. Suwa (2001b:93) identifies that the concept of cultural conservation and ownership, as it is known in the West, is an ideal adopted by these communities. If this preservation ideal is indeed an exogenous one, let us consider, then, the extent to which the Duna might engage this ideal.

**Preservation**

As we have seen, the Duna value textual innovation in songs across the spectrum of musical influence. Therefore, songs themselves are constantly changing, though one could say that the melodic material—through melodic recycling due
to the importance of melodic markers for genres—is generally preserved. This constant changing in practice appears to overshadow the Duna’s desire for song preservation. Such an attitude is not unusual in Papua New Guinea; Suwa implies as much for the coastal song tradition he studies. Closer to home, Niles suggests of the Ku Waru people of the Western Highlands region that for their genre of *tom yaya kange* at least, creativity in the text is important in a performance. For this genre, performers present their narratives in ‘a metrically and melodically highly regular and predictable framework’—one that ‘enables listeners to focus on the constantly-changing poetry of the text’ (Niles 2007:119). Similar to the Duna, then, for the Ku Waru, song preservation comes about through fixed melodic structures, but the focus (and value) is on textual innovation.

One could argue that an apparent strong sense of individual agency could diminish any inclination towards the idea of ‘preservation’. An example from my fieldwork at Kopiago highlights this possibility. In an interview at Hirane parish with the renowned *pikono* singer Kiale Yokona (see Figure 7.1), the topic of the many young Duna men’s interest in guitar music arose. This activity was aligned with European ways and was contrasted with Duna ancestral interests such as the performance of *pikono*. Commenting on this, Kiale (Interview, 16 March 2005) said that he personally chose to continue in the ways of his father. There was no concern expressed for the actions of others in his generation or the next (though he did express, when asked, that he expected that his young son would in time learn to perform *pikono*). This ‘every man for himself’ or ‘it’s his affair’ attitude (Strathern 1979) could affect the maintenance of these traditions.

Another example of individualism and its effect on preservation can be seen in the following comments of a Duna cultural leader and spokesperson. During a series of performances staged for Tim Scott and myself in 2005 (one of which is captured visually in Chapter 2, Figure 2.1), an older man was present, overseeing the dress, decoration and performance by the Duna men (see Figure 7.2). Afterwards I asked of his background. He said that his name was Pati Kweria and he was a man of mixed Huli and Duna descent (see Figure 7.3). Pati was recognised by some as a kind of cultural ambassador for the region, having travelled to Singapore in the mid to late 1970s with a Huli group to promote Papua New Guinea with the funding of an unspecified Australian company and with the support of the Koroba-Lake Kopiago MP of the time, Andrew Wabiria (Pati Kweria, Interview, 21 April 2005).

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5 Early anthropological literature argued that Highlands societies were highly individualistic; however, the new Melanesian ethnography—in particular, the writings of Marilyn Strathern (1988)—argued against this claim, suggesting that personhood in that region is rather ‘dividual’ or relational. Recent research adds to this debate, noting a distinction between individuality and individualism (Cohen 1994:168), the coexistence of both individuality and dividuality, even in Marilyn Strathern’s model (Rumsey 2006b:343), the existence of a concept of selfishness (LiPuma 1998:79) and the possibility of an individuation that is ‘freed and enacted in particular circumstances’ (Corin 1998:87).
Figure 7.1 Kiale Yokona at Hirane, March 2005.
Pati spoke about his role as teacher of traditions to Huli and Duna men, particularly as they pertained to dress and body adornment (he stated that he did not instruct in the manner of singing). When I asked him if he had any concern about a potential loss of traditions, he replied in his basic Tok Pisin:

Ol laik kam long mi, mi lanim. Nau, ol i no toktok na ol i no kam long mi, mi lusim nau…ol i no kam, mi bai hat long tokim aut, ol i no harim tok bilong mi. Olsem na mi lusim.

[If they all want to come to me, I’ll teach them. Now they don’t say (that they want to learn), and they don’t come, so I leave it…(as) they don’t come, it is hard to speak out, they don’t listen to what I say. So I leave it.]

The next year, I conducted an interview with Duna man Hawai Pawiya in Mount Hagen, after he and his friend had performed a number of the ancestral song genres of *yekia* and *selepa* for me to record (see Figure 7.4). Of a similar age to Kiale, Hawai had been living in the town for some time. According to him, *yekia* and *selepa* are sung in the houses of Duna people who live in Mount Hagen. Hawai expressed his belief that the ancestral (or ‘tumbuna’) way would not be lost to the people at home in the Southern Highlands or in Mount Hagen because it is ‘inside the blood’:

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6 I was unable to witness such performances myself as it was considered unwise for a white person, or indeed any young woman, to walk around the town of Mount Hagen in the evening (advice offered by both Duna people and Australians).
Figure 7.3 Pati Kweria at Hirane, April 2005.
Steep Slopes

Dispela pasin bilong tumbuna em i pasin insait long blut. Em i stap yet. 
Em pasin tumbuna em, em kastom pasin hia na em bai yumi no inap 
lusim, em yumi holim, em yumi laikim, em bilong mipela. Em...Tasol 
123 kam na ABC kam na ol sampela kain sios o lotu o kain samting, 
gutpela kain samting i kam nau, yumi olgeta manmeri i go long dispela 
hap na nau yumi i stat skul na lanim i go kam i stap. So pasin tumbuna 
bilong yumi em yumi ino lusim, em i pas long blut so dispela...yumi i 
stap yet. Bihain bihain tu bai yumi givim long pikinini bilong mipela 
yet.

[This ancestral way is the way that is inside the blood. It is still inside. 
The ancestral way, it is the custom way here and we will not be able to 
lose that, we hold it, we like it, it belongs to us. That it does...But (now) 
123 (numeracy) comes and ABC (literacy) comes and some churches or 
religions or various other things, various good things come now, and we 
all (Duna) people go to that side and now we start school and learning. 
So the ancestral way we have we cannot lose, it runs in the blood so 
this...we will still remain. Much later too we will still give it to our 
children.] (Hawai Pawiya, Interview, 10 July 2006)

Hawai commented that he liked the ‘tumbuna’ way, it was good and it was 
better than any other way:

Mi laikim tumbuna pasin bilong mi. Tumbuna pasin em gutpela. Em i 
moa gutpela long olgeta samting—em gutpela. Em.

[I like the ways of my ancestors. The ancestral way, it is good. It is better 
than anything—it is good. That it is.]

The Duna as a group have expressed this ‘tumbuna pasin’ at public forums 
both within their ‘place’ and outside. These public displays, however, have as 
their primary goal a display of Duna identity, not necessarily the preservation 
of traditions, though it can be considered that this might be one outcome of 
the displays. The examples presented here are the performances accompanying 
election campaigns and the Duna and Mount Hagen Cultural Shows.
Figure 7.4 Hawai Pawiya showing his newly constructed pigpens at his place in Mount Hagen, July 2006.
Politics

Times of political activity, particularly times of campaigning preceding an election, are often also times of cultural performance for the Duna. Robinson (2002:143–4) writes that the 1997 national elections inspired the regular practising and performance of ‘singsings’ at Lake Kopiago. Although details of the musical practices incorporated are not given, it can be fairly safely assumed that the performances were of *mali* (as this is the only group singing, moving and playing available and used for celebratory occasions). Haley similarly writes that the 1997 elections were a forum for teaching and reinforcing Duna dress and behaviour—in particular, as opposed to the neighbouring Huli language group, who also had candidates in the election. She recounts:

[In the] weeks, even months, leading up to the election there were regular dance contests at the Dilini market place, in which the supporters of each candidate, dressed in traditional dress, would compete against each other in order to demonstrate the worthiness of their candidate. These occasions also served as an opportunity for older men and women to instruct the younger ones on the true ‘Duna’ way to dress and conduct oneself. Individuals who were seen to be adopting or incorporating what were viewed to be Huli forms of dress were publicly chastised. (Haley 2002b:132)

Some scholars see occasions of politics as a way to ‘misuse’ culture. Ammann (2001:156) writes: ‘There are many groups among [Pacific] islander populations who do not want, or who do not care about, the maintenance of Melanesian cultural values…Besides not caring about cultural values, or even rejecting their culture, people may deliberately misuse their culture, especially during political campaigns and debates.’ It is not clear what Ammann means by ‘misuse’ here. It might be considered a ‘misuse’ when a cultural practice is being performed in a context different to that originally intended; however, a new context can be considered a creative adaptation rather than a misuse and could be the only context available for such traditional practices in a contemporary world.

In many cases, politics lies at the heart of the revival of traditional cultural practices. Another institution is equally, if not more, effective in Papua New Guinea, and this is the phenomenon of the cultural show.
The Duna and cultural shows

The cultural show in Papua New Guinea has been popular across the country for several decades, since the first shows were mounted in the Highlands centres of Goroka and Mount Hagen in the 1950s and held in alternate years. Crowdy describes the phenomenon as follows:

These cultural shows usually consist of a performance arena for traditional dance groups, a stage for power bands and an arena for commercial displays. Based on Australian rural shows and instigated and supported by the Australian administration in the 1950s and 1960s they have become an important part of cultural production in PNG, with a considerable degree of kudos associated with participation, by both traditional and popular music groups, and results in their competitive sections. (Crowdy 2001:142–3)

It has been written that the cultural show in Papua New Guinea was established in the Highlands as ‘a substitute for warfare’ (Sullivan n.d.:15; see also Kunda 2006:40)—that is, to promote peace. With opposing Highlands groups competing in the show context for prize money, however, the cultural show in this context can rather be seen as an extension of warfare in another guise. Due to the often violent consequences of such competition in the past, winning groups are still judged but the prize money—at the Mount Hagen Cultural Show at least—is now distributed equally among participants and in 2006 the amount given to each performer was K60 (Max Kumbamong, Chairman of the Mount Hagen Cultural Show, Email communication, 10 May 2007).

Cultural shows are considered by Papua New Guineans to be vital to tourism and the preservation of culture. A Papua New Guinean newspaper article describing the revival of the Waghi Cultural Show declares that

[p]reserving and promoting traditional culture is the only way to attract overseas tourists to flock into the country. Papua New Guinea is venturing into the modern way of life and our culture and traditions are slowly fading, with only a few people struggling to preserve it to bring in tourists. (Taime 2006)

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7 The show was also said to have been initiated in order ‘to assist in population censuses’ (Kunda 2006:40).
8 In 2005 a system of grading participant groups was in place in which the best groups were paid K60 each, the regular groups K50 and the poorest groups K40. This grading was based on the level of authenticity of the groups’ ‘bilas’ (their adornments and body decoration for the performance); K40 performers would be those who incorporated much non-traditional material into their outfit (for example, plastic bottles or grain bags). This grading scale was meant to encourage the use of traditional materials, but was not enforced in 2005; rather, all performers that year received K50 each. Although it was expressed that the committee wished to enforce this grading better in 2006, it appears from Kumbamong’s correspondence above that the grading did not eventuate that year either (Don Niles, Email communication, 19 May 2007).
This same newspaper also featured a full-page advertisement entitled ‘Reviving the Malagan Show’ (Namuri 2006). Thus it seems that the idea of reviving culture through shows is prominent in contemporary Papua New Guinean consciousness, and actively encouraged.

The Duna first participated in a cultural show in Goroka in 1958, in a small group together with representatives of the Huli (Sinclair 1984:164–5). They were reportedly well received, described as ‘the hit of the Show’ and ‘their arrogant bearing and unique wigs, far superior in design and execution to the pudding-basin and bullock-horn wigs of the Enga-speaking tribes of Wabag, aroused keen interest’ (Sinclair 1984:165). It seems that the Southern Highlanders continued to be of interest in subsequent show appearances for the remoteness of their place of origin; in a description of the 1967 Mount Hagen show, the Duna from Kopiago were reported to be one of the groups that had travelled the furthest—193 km—in order to participate (Anonymous 1967:10).

Before the 2006 Mount Hagen Cultural Show, most Duna people in the town that I spoke to did not think that their culture would be represented at the show that year. One young woman said that there was too much fighting and too much disagreement among the Duna who lived in Mount Hagen for them to form a group (Jacqueline Jack, Personal communication, 11 August 2006). Richard Alo said the Duna living in Mount Hagen would not be able to participate in the show as they did not have the required bush materials at hand to make their costumes and body decorations and it was too difficult for Duna people living at home in the Southern Highlands to travel to Mount Hagen to perform, due to the inaccessibility of transport (Richard Alo, Personal communication, June 2006).

I was, therefore, quite surprised when moving about the arena at that year’s show to hear my name being called out by one of the performers. Turning around, I saw my young Duna friend Oksi Mapu, whom I had met at Kopiago the previous year, and who had come to Mount Hagen to ‘raun nating’ (to just go around with nothing particular to do). With a group of other young men, he was painted quite unlike anything I had ever seen before, with black and white stripes across the body, reminiscent of the patterns of a football jersey (a favourite garment among Highlander men). The resemblance did not seem coincidental, with some men even having painted numbers on their backs. The only piece of clothing they wore was a pair of football shorts. The football motif can be extended further, too, when one considers the arena on which they were performing: normally a rugby league ground where, on the second and final day of the Hagen Cultural Show, performers had to make sure they left the arena early so that the regular game of rugby league could start on time at 3 pm.
One young Duna man had bamboo attached to his fingers and he led the group, which moved in a chain with their hands on the hips of the person in front (see Figure 7.5). The young men were in turn led by a slightly older man carrying a sign that read ‘Kund Rot SS group’, meant to identify their ‘singsing’ group. At intervals, the performers would stop their chain-like movement and pose for the cameras (see Figure 7.6).

At one of these breaks in their performance, I took the opportunity to question the leader about himself and his group. He gave his name as Henri Hiruma and his place of origin as Hirane on his mother’s side (he said that his father came from Pori, which is on the border of the Duna and Huli-speaking areas of the Southern Highlands). The performers, he said, came from several settlement areas in Mount Hagen and the payment per participant was, he said, the motivation for their forming the group. Of the dance, Henri assured me that it was a traditional Duna dance form known as ita khawua (meaning ‘wild pig’), which was performed during the daytime, by men only, to make the pigs come; the only vocals utilised in the dance were pig-like snorts, which is often the way Duna people call their pigs. The dance had been renamed the ‘snek denis’ (snake dance) after the group’s distinct snake-like movements.

Figure 7.5 Duna performance at Mount Hagen Cultural Show, 19 August 2006 (note the painted number 9 on the man in the foreground).
The movements were certainly distinct. I had not seen anything like them and thought it odd that I had not seen or heard about this genre at Kopiago (admittedly, though, as there is no ipakana [singing] or alima [instruments] involved in the ita khawua, it could have been considered by the Duna people to be outside my research interests). So I turned to my companion at the show, Richard Alo, for further explanation.

Richard specified that the performance was a khawua kohu. It was something performed in times past, after the yekia ritual when the men and women wished to remove the ipa siri (water spirits) who had been with them inside the yekianda. There was no particular body decoration for this chasing away of the ipa siri; despite Henri’s statements to the contrary, Richard assured me that the body decorations I saw in front of me now were pure show creations. Similar body decoration (black and white painted stripes, bamboo finger attachments) can be seen in two photographs published by Rainier (1996:74–5), attributed to the Minj area in the Wagher Valley and to Chimbu Province, which suggests that this style of decoration is a pan-Highlands creation.

![Figure 7.6 Duna performers at rest (Oksi Mapu faces camera at far left).](image)

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9 It should be remembered from the previous chapter that the ipa siri are said to have a role in bringing men and women together in courtship (in this way the ipa siri could be said to resemble the Cupid of the Western world).
It is worth noting that at the 2007 Mount Hagen Cultural Show another Duna group from the settlement was formed to present the ‘snek denis’. Their movements and their body decorations were much the same, with the addition of a declaration of place on their backs: ‘LK NANE’ (‘Lake Kopiago Boys’) (see Figure 7.7).

A second ‘snek denis’ group was also in attendance at the 2007 Mount Hagen Cultural Show. Their group sign declared them as the ‘Warakala Snake Boys’, and when I spoke to them after their performance they told me they were originally from Tari (Huli language speakers) but now lived in a settlement area near the Mount Hagen army barracks named after a small creek called Kala. The leader of the Warakala Snake Boys—that is, the boy at the front of the ‘snake’ line—had added to his costume a mask he had purchased at the local store, which was to represent the head of the snake (see Figure 7.8). This mask was none other than a replica of that used in the popular US horror film series *Scream*, which is of course based on the Norwegian expressionist painter Edvard Munch’s famous work of 1893 entitled *The Scream* (see Figure 7.8).
The cultural show, then, in these cases does not seem to be very successful at all in the preservation of ancestral performance practices. Some elements of traditional practice might be revived for the context, but here it was heavily reinvented—recontextualised, re-dressed and even renamed. One might ask why an antral genre of display such as Duna *mali mapu* was not chosen to be performed. Perhaps, as Richard suspected, it was because of a lack of materials for the dress and body decoration. Perhaps the Duna people of Mount Hagen were unskilled in performing that genre and others were not able to travel the distance. Perhaps, though, the very prominent display by the Huli people of their *mali mbawa* at the show (and also at other shows in times past) dissuaded a presentation of a similar dance by the Duna, who would wish to assert their difference and deny resemblance in the name of identity (Harrison 2006).

During my fieldwork at Kopiago in 2005, there was continued talk of the impending Duna Cultural Show. The supposedly annual event had even been advertised on posters produced by the National Cultural Commission and on the Internet through the Papua New Guinea Tourism and Business Directory web site (as the ‘DSPB Cultural Show’ of ‘Lake Koplage [sic] District’, where it continues to be erroneously listed). The show, however, never happened. Various reasons were given for this, the most common being the lack of funds available (though from where, no-one was sure—some said the provincial government) and the limited (and seemingly variable) availability of the president of the Kopiago local government council, Paiele Elo, who was the organiser of the Duna Cultural Show but who lived predominantly in the provincial capital of Mendi.

Petros Kilapa described to me his experience of the Duna Cultural Show of times past. The seven language groups that make up the descendents of the Hela brothers (see Chapter 2 and the story of Mburulu Pango) and are believed to share the same ancestry (Bogaya, Sinali, Hewa, Duna, Oksi, Huli and Enga)
were said to come together at this time and celebrate, and also to trade among themselves—for example, the Hewa would trade feathers with the Duna for modern items such as pots or other Kopiago store products. The different groups would display their ancestral performance genres, with the Duna showcasing *mali mapu*, *selepa* and *yekia*. Duna could even join in other groups’ dancing if they dressed and decorated themselves in exactly the same way. Stringband competitions with their own compositions were held and church songs could also be sung (religion did play a part, as pastors opened the show). Other events included tug-of-war competitions for men, ‘tanim rop’ races for women (rolling string or wool as part of the preparations to make bags), fire-making and tree-felling races, and much selling of crafts (Petros Kilapa, Personal communication, 25 April 2005).

In 2005, however, none of these anticipated activities occurred; the Duna Cultural Show did not eventuate. Reportedly it had not been held for several years. So it seems that cultural shows held on a local level are not that successful in terms of ‘preservation’ for Duna music either—not because of a lack of ancestral genres performed, but simply because they rarely come to pass. Does this mean, then, that the Duna are not interested in cultural preservation?

It can be said that during the time of this research, Duna attitudes to the maintenance of their ancestral past were mixed. A few people (namely older people) expressed concern that certain traditions were no longer practised; however, the majority did not express an opinion on the matter or did not, in fact, seem to comprehend why I might ask such a question, when I looked explicitly for an opinion. This non-engagement with the issue can be interpreted in a number of ways and one of these is that many Duna did not perceive that there was a decline in ancestral practices, in particular as it applied to Duna song. I have argued throughout that continuity is present in the themes, functions and now the composition of Duna songs, so such an interpretation can be supported here. After all, ‘[p]eople act in the world in terms of the social beings they are, and it should not be forgotten that from their quotidian point of view it is the global system that is peripheral, not them’ (Sahlins 1999:412).

Those Duna who expressed concern over a decline in past practices thought that educational institutions could be of service to this cause. Two individuals—Richard Alo and Sane Noma—cited contemporary and ancestral institutions and both stressed the need for such education to be funded by external first-world sources, particularly Australian ones.10

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10 It is important to remember that these ideas were expressed in these terms to me, an Australian.
Education for preservation: the school and the haroli palena

In Papua New Guinea, as elsewhere, it is widely understood that schools are an important place for the teaching of culture (cf. Faik-Simet 2006). Duna people too have recognised this. Richard Alo once accounted to me his desire to introduce a program of cultural studies to Kopiago schools, in which traditional ways (he specified traditional dress and decoration) would be taught by the older people in the community. Such a program had been implemented on a small scale (Wednesday mornings only) and for a short period in 2005 by the Rewapi Elementary School in Hirane parish, whose teachers were supported financially by an Australian benefactor. Richard stressed, however, that he would need to be funded by a body such as the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), which manages the Australian government’s overseas aid program, in order to implement such a program. When I asked why, he responded with another question: ‘How else will I pay the teachers?’ (Richard Alo, Personal communication, 4 August 2006). His express need for external funding for his project echoes the sentiments expressed by Sane Noma below.

As revealed in Chapter 2’s overview of Duna ancestral musical practices, the haroli palena bachelor cult was in the past the most important space for the education of adolescent boys and younger men. The mindimindi kão spearheaded the music of this education process. As was described in Chapter 2, the mindimindi kão are spells that instruct and educate the haroli palena initiates. Example 7.1 is part of a mindimindi kão sung to me for recording. The first minute is translated below.

Example 7.1 (Audio 52, 0:00–1:02) Mindimindi kão.

\begin{verbatim}
  alupa kendata hunake ha nake alupa head on pillow in deep sleep
  paiyape kendata hunake ha nake paiyape head on pillow in deep sleep
  remeti kendata hunake ha nake remeti head on pillow in deep sleep
  hundu kendata hunake ha nake hundu head on pillow in deep sleep
  ili hinika kundale kundapa kunda yope yopa clean with the leaves of the ili tree then go
  rewaya hinika kundale kundapa kunda yope yopa clean with the leaves of the rewaya ili tree then go
  kayema hinika kundale kundapa kunda yope yopa clean with the leaves of the kayema ili tree then go
  kundale hinika kundale kundapa kunda yope yopa clean with the leaves of the kundale ili tree then go
  ipa kurukuta koko sopa heyana kepa kepa (on the) saltwater, the light is coming down, look, look
  ripu sopa heyana kepa kepa the ripu light is coming down, look, look
\end{verbatim}
The repetitive textual and melodic structure of this mindimindi kâo instructs the haroli palena boys to sleep well and to clean themselves using a particular kind of leaf. Bachelor cult initiates are often depicted as having glowing skin, and the juxtaposition of the description of light shining on water and the dawning light with these instructions on how to sleep and clean oneself indicates how this desired result can be obtained.

Outside the haroli palena, mindimindi kâo are not often heard, except when people such as myself ask about musical practices from the ‘taim bipo’ (‘time before’). The oldest generations of Duna people are the ones who hold this knowledge from their time in the haroli palena. Men under the age of fifty years or so have to refer back to the elders of their clan in order to understand completely the texts and praise names of mindimindi kâo and the messages conveyed by the sound of the instruments once used in the haroli palena. In other words, much of the creative expression within the haroli palena has not been adapted to the changing social context.

A former haroli palena leader, Sane Noma saw enormous cultural change for the Duna people over his lifetime. We met regularly over the course of my fieldwork in 2005 and at almost every meeting we had he expressed his concern for his people and for the future. One of the ideas he voiced was the re-establishment of the haroli palena in order to restore order in his community (which had recently been destabilised by the violent behaviour of a group of young men). The absence of the haroli palena is problematic for Duna men. Stürzenhofecker writes:

The demise of the Palena cult may also be seen as having contributed to male anxiety. One thing the cult accomplished was the removal of boys from domestic life with their mothers and their institutionalized socialization into male personhood under the tutelage of ritually pure bachelors...This time of separation no longer exists, and in a sense boys pass in an unrecognized and amorphous period of limbo from boyhood to manhood without a context in which they are unambiguously taught
the proper way to be men. Many later filled this void by seeking work outside of the local area as laborers on coastal plantations or, more recently, on mining sites. (Stürzenhofecker 1998:171)

On my visit to Kopiago in 2005, Sane was keen to find out if there was any funding available for him to re-establish the haroli palena. Although in times past one would not have needed cash to do this, Sane said he needed the money to ‘katim diwai na wokim haus’ (‘cut the trees and build the house’)—that is, pay for the use of the local sawmill owned by one of the pastors to cut and shape timber and to source other building items such as nails and corrugated iron. Although Sane championed ancestral practices, he wished to gain financial support from visitors and benefit from the high social status that such support would bring. This process of combining the capitalist world with the pre-contact one could on the surface appear incongruous, but could rather be considered as ‘the indigenization of modernity, [establishing] their own cultural space in the global scheme of things’ (Sahlins 1999:410). A return to the haroli palena, however, does not on its own satisfy, as the following section reveals.

Being ‘in the middle’

Many young Duna men are acutely aware of the lack of transmission between generations and what that means for their future and their identity.11 Jeremiah Piero, Kipu Piero’s brother, who was introduced in Chapters 3 and 4 and who was in his early twenties at the time of interview, explains the situation as he sees it:

Sapos yumi i putim long skul tasol, na mi faul establishing kastom bilong mipela, em ol save holim nau, mi lus tingting na mi stap. Laki mama bilong mi i stap na mi askim. Na ol man i stap na mi askim. Sapos mama bilong mi i no stap na ol man i dai, na yupela kam olsem na askim mi, mi tok olsem ‘mi no save’ ya. Mi bai tok olsem tasol i go.

[If I just go to school and don’t learn the custom of my people, that which they know now, I’ll forget everything. It’s lucky that my mother is here and I can ask her. The old men are alive and I can ask them. But if my mother wasn’t here and the old men were dead, and you people came and asked me (questions), I’d have to say ‘I don’t know’. I’d say that and then go.] (Jeremiah Piero, Interview, 2 April 2005)

Jeremiah’s generation, in grappling with a liminal state, often appeals to visitors to their community for guidance and ultimately assistance in their quest for identity. In the same interview, Jeremiah said to me:

Taim mi bin stap long skul, mi bin komparim ol pasin bilong wait man, na mi bin komparim ol pasin bilong tumbuna bilong mi. Na mi lukim olsem dispela pasin bilong waitman em i stap long we. Na pasin bilong tumbuna bilong em i stap long we. Mi stap [long] namel strett. Mi hat long go bek long kisim pasin bilong tumbuna. Na mi hat long go kisim pasin bilong ol waitman. Na dispela ask tasol mi laik askim long yu: sapos mi stap namel strett, mi lusim skul, na mi laik kisim pasin bilong waitman, em i hat na hat olgeta. Na mi laik kisim pasin bilong ol tumbuna bilong mi, em hat na hat olgeta. Na mi stap namel strett. Husait bai sapolim mi… Nau mipela i stap namel strett na mipela i float raun long hia. Yu gat we long helpim mipela long dispela o nogat?

[When I was at school (Mendi High School, located in the provincial capital), I compared the white man’s ways with the ways of my ancestors. And I can see that the white man’s ways are a long way away. And the ways of my ancestors are a long way away. I’m really in the middle. It’s hard for me to go back and get the ways of my ancestors. And it’s hard for me to go and get the ways of the white man. Now this question I’d like to ask you: if I’m in the middle, and I’ve left school but I would like to get the ways of the white man, it’s really hard. And if I would like to get the ways of my ancestors it’s really hard. Who will support me… Now we (young men) are stuck in the middle and just floating around here. Have you got a way to help us with this or not?

When I asked Jeremiah what he thought about going into a re-established haroli palena as a solution, he responded:

Sapos yumi putim olgeta pikinini i go bek long ‘bachelor culture’ bilong mipela…em husait bai lukautim ol pikinini bilong skul? Husait bai lukautim haus sik? Husait bai totok toktaim ol waitman, ‘interpreting’?…mipela no inap lusim eduksen, mipela i no inap lusim kastom. So this tupela wantaim, sapos yumi holim tupela wantaim, em bai ‘balance’. Sapos yumi go bek long kastom bilong mipela, em bai ‘unbalance’ na ‘unbalance’.

[If we put the boys back into the bachelor cult…who will look after the children at school? Who will look after the medical clinic? Who will talk with the white man, interpreting?…we can’t leave education, (but)
we can’t leave custom. So these two together, if we can have the two together, it will be balanced. If we go back to (only) custom, it will be really unbalanced.]

A balance involving the haroli palena, it seems, would be very hard to achieve for Duna people in the face of a desired ‘modernity’. A revival of the haroli palena now, in order to stabilise Duna society and guide young men as once before, and to maintain cultural practices of the past at this critical time, would be fraught with difficulties. The people implicate the researcher (and in particular the Australian researcher) in their efforts to forge an identity that is current in their new world.

Conclusion: preservation in the continuity of creativity

As people create music that is built partly on musical elements already established (which, as Liep makes evident, is an essential aspect of the creative process), a key result is the conservation or maintenance of these elements through their use in a new form. Of course, not all elements are conserved; otherwise there would not be creativity.

Staged efforts to display and, in effect, maintain traditions have generally not been successful for the Duna cause, being seen as at best irregular efforts (for example, the Duna Cultural Show) and, at worst, entirely unrepresentative of Duna genres (as was seen at the 2006 Mount Hagen Show). They are, however, sites for creativity, sites where, to paraphrase Sahlins, the modern is indigenised—or, rather, the indigenous is modernised.

Jeremiah Piero has provided the answer to his concerns: combining old and new ways will achieve balance. His generation is finding a way to continue traditions—at least musical traditions—in a creative way that acknowledges and integrates the past with the current context, using both old and new musical mediums. Perhaps, as Appadurai (1991:474) suggests, rather than reject these new musical expressions created by the Duna, scholars should instead consider that ‘it may be the idea of a folk world in need of conservation that must be rejected, so that there can be a vigorous engagement with…the world we live in now’.