

Universal Music: Cosmic Resonance and Asia-Pacific Mythology

Ketut Sumerjana^a, I Komang Sudirga^a, I Kt. Suteja^a, I Wayan Suharta^a

^aInstitut Seni Indonesia Bali

ABSTRACT

This article explores the concept of universal music the cosmic resonance underpinning existence through Asia-Pacific mythologies and contemporary philosophical discourse. It investigates how traditional cosmologies, from the Om vibration in Hindu thought to Polynesian chants and Aboriginal Dreamtime songs, articulate sound as a primordial creative force and the fundamental principle of interconnection. By tracing these mythic soundscapes, this study reveals the early epistemologies of systems thinking and ecological interdependence encoded in the sonic metaphors. Furthermore, it examines the role of mythic sound in shaping cultural identity and collective ethics, highlighting how ritual practices and modern reinterpretations sustain cultural continuity in the context of globalisation. This article argues for a symphonic worldview that integrates ancient wisdom with contemporary science quantum vibration, acoustic ecology, and sound healing to foster relational modes of being and governance grounded in resonance rather than in domination. This synthesis offers practical insights for sustainable development and environmental stewardship by emphasising listening as an ethical practice. Ultimately, the mythic songs of the Asia-Pacific underscore the imperative for humanity to cultivate a new auditory consciousness one attuned to the rhythms of the earth, community, and cosmos to address the pressing ecological crises of the contemporary world.

KEYWORDS

Cosmic resonance, asia-pacific mythology, acoustic ecology, symphonic worldview



©2025 The Author(s).
Published by Penerbitan
LP2MPP Institut Seni
Indonesia Bali. This is an
open-access article
under the [CC-BY 4.0](#)
license.

Introduction

In an era marked by ecological degradation, rapid technological acceleration, and global sociocultural fragmentation, the search for equilibrium between the spiritual and material has become an urgent philosophical and ethical concern [1]. Across disciplines, scholars have begun to revisit traditional epistemologies to uncover modes of relational thinking that transcend the binaries of nature and culture, and self and cosmos. Within this intellectual resurgence, the concept of universal music the vibration or resonance that unites all forms of existence emerges as a compelling metaphor and metaphysical principle that can reframe our understanding of interconnectedness and sustainability.

From an Asia-Pacific perspective, mythological traditions have long expressed the universe as a field of dynamic resonance, where creation is conceived through sound, rhythm, and vibration [2]. In these cosmologies, sound is not merely aesthetic but

ontological; it constitutes the fabric of being and mediates relationships between humans, the environment, and the divine. Interpreting such mythic narratives through contemporary philosophical and ecological frameworks allows for a renewed dialogue between ancient wisdom and modern science, offering pathways to balance and planetary renewal [3].

The purpose of this section is to articulate the philosophical premise that cosmic resonance is not a symbolic abstraction but a living principle embedded in Asia-Pacific mythologies and echoed in contemporary, transdisciplinary thought. By engaging with these traditions, this study proposes that ancient cosmologies provide not only cultural insights but also epistemological resources for reimagining humanity's place within the greater resonance of existence.

Delving Into Asia-Pacific Mythology: Tracing The Roots of Cosmic Sound

The mythological landscapes of the Asia-Pacific region are rich in narratives in which sound functions as the primordial source of creation. From the reverberating *Om* of Hindu cosmology, which signifies the vibrational essence of the universe [4], to Polynesian chants of origin that speak the world into being [5], and Aboriginal Dreamtime songs that map land, spirit, and identity through sonic expression [6], these traditions articulate sound as metaphysical and generative. In each case, creation is not a singular divine act but an ongoing resonance, suggesting that the cosmos is structured as a living and vibrational continuum.

The interconnection between the cosmos and the earth a central motif in Asia-Pacific mythic thought reveals a worldview where all beings are participants in a resonant field. In Polynesian cosmology, for instance, the chant (*karakia* or *oli*) is not a mere recitation but an act that maintains the rhythm of life and ensures an ecological balance [7]. Similarly, in Aboriginal Australian traditions, *songlines* embody sacred cartography through which ancestors, humans, and environments are intertwined by shared vibrations [8]. These narratives offer profound insights into relational ontology, the understanding that existence is co-constituted through reciprocal resonance among humans, nonhumans and the cosmos [9].

From a philosophical perspective, such mythic imaginaries reveal an early form of systems thinking that anticipates the contemporary ecological and quantum paradigms. The notion that sound, rhythm, and vibration are foundational to reality aligns with modern theories of matter and energy as frequency patterns [10] [11]. Thus, the Asia-Pacific mythological imagination can be understood as a proto-ecological philosophy that expresses an intuitive grasp of interdependence and dynamic equilibrium long before these concepts entered the Western scientific discourse. In this sense, cosmic

sound is both a metaphor and a metaphysical principle that bridges ancient cosmology and contemporary thought on sustainability and relationality.

Mythology and Cultural Identity: Resonance as A Social and Ethical Principle

The role of mythic soundscapes in shaping cultural identity and collective consciousness is profound and multifaceted. Across the Asia-Pacific, ritual chanting, drumming, and vocal traditions serve as more than artistic expressions; they are living conduits for communal memory and social cohesion [12]. These sonic practices establish shared rhythms that structure temporal experiences and embed moral frameworks into cultural life. Contemporary art forms and environmental activism in the region increasingly draw upon these inherited resonances, using sound to articulate place-based identities and advocate for ecological justice. Through this continuity, sound functions as a normative force, transforming mythic narratives into ethical imperatives that guide communal behaviour and responsibility toward the environment.

In the context of cultural continuity and transformation, Asia-Pacific societies negotiate the dynamic interplay between ancient mythic resonance and the pressures of globalisation, modernisation and diasporic movements [13, 14]. Indigenous and local communities reinterpret their sonic heritage by adapting traditional chants and rhythms to contemporary contexts, from digital media to global-performance circuits. This rearticulation fosters cultural resilience and revitalisation, allowing heritage to remain relevant while confronting the challenges of identity loss and cultural homogenisation [15]. Thus, mythic sound remains a vital medium for articulating belonging and sustaining cultural memories amid rapid social change.

Philosophically, the ethical dimension of resonance invites reflection on how sonic harmony parallels social harmony, emphasising the values of empathy, balance, and interbeing. Drawing on the concept of *ubuntu* in African philosophy and relational ontologies in Indigenous epistemologies, scholars have argued that communal well-being arises from reciprocal attunement akin to musical consonance [16, 17]. The metaphor of sound as an ethical principle underscores the importance of listening, not only as auditory reception but also as active engagement with others and the environment. This ethic of resonance fosters a relational morality that privileges coexistence and mutual respect over domination and exploitation [18, 19]. Hence, the mythic soundscape transcends cultural specificity to inform universal ideals of social and ecological justice.

Conclusion

This study underscores the imperative of reconnecting traditional cosmologies with contemporary scientific paradigms, notably quantum physics, sound healing, and acoustic ecology, to articulate a holistic *symphonic worldview* [10, 20, 21]. This worldview recognises vibration and resonance as fundamental ontological principles, bridging ancient mythic understandings with cutting-edge scientific insights into the material and immaterial fabric of reality. By synthesising these perspectives, the notion of cosmic sound transcends metaphor, becoming a framework through which we can rethink human-nature relations and our place in the biosphere.

The practical implications of this perspective are significant. Embracing a world conceived as vibrational invites innovations in artistic expression, governance, and sustainability initiatives rooted in the ethics of resonance rather than hierarchical dominance [22, 23]. Such a shift foregrounds relationality, mutual attunement, and dynamic balance, fostering adaptable, inclusive, and regenerative social and ecological systems. The incorporation of sound-based practices, such as rituals, communal music-making, and soundscapes, into environmental stewardship exemplifies how mythic knowledge and contemporary science can coalesce to inspire transformative actions [24].

Ultimately, the mythic songs of the Asia-Pacific serve as a vital reminder that planetary healing demands more than technological solutions; it requires a profound reorientation toward listening attentively and respectfully to the earth, to each other, and to the cosmic symphony that sustains life. This renewed auditory ethics is foundational for cultivating a symphonic consciousness that embraces complexity, honours interconnectedness, and nurtures the flourishing of all beings.

References

- [1] A. Escobar, *Designs for the pluriverse : radical interdependence, autonomy, and the making of worlds* (New Ecologies for the Twenty-First Century). Durham ;: Duke University Press, 2018.
- [2] M. Beckwith, *Oceanic soundscapes: Myth, ecology, and the Pacific imagination*. University of Hawai'i Press. 2022.
- [3] T. Ingold, "Anthropology and/as Education (1st ed.). Routledge,," <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315227191>, 2017, doi: 10.4324/9781315227191.
- [4] S. Radhakrishnan and C. A. Moore, *A source book in Indian philosophy*. Princeton University Press, 1957.
- [5] A. L. Kaeppeler, "Dance in Anthropological Perspective," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 7, pp. 31-49, 1978. [Online]. Available: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2155686>.
- [6] T. Strehlow, *Songs of Central Australia*. 2018.

- [7] T. K. Tengan, & Ka'ili, T. O. , *Re-membering Oceania: Indigenous knowledge, spirituality and sustainability*. University of Hawai'i Press. 2020.
- [8] D. B. Rose, *Dingo makes us human: Life and land in an Aboriginal Australian culture*. Cambridge University Press. 2022.
- [9] Bawaka Country et al., *Songspirals: Sharing women's wisdom of the country through songlines*. Allen & Unwin. 2019.
- [10] K. Barad, *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press. 2007.
- [11] F. Capra, & Luisi, P. L., *The systems view of life: A unifying vision*. Cambridge University Press. 2016.
- [12] A. L. Kaeppler, "The Visual and Performing Arts of the Pacific: A Historical Overview," in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Ocean: Volume 2: The Pacific Ocean since 1800*, vol. 2, A. P. Hattori and J. Samson Eds., (The Cambridge History of the Pacific Ocean. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023, pp. 286-312.
- [13] E. Hau'Ofa, *We are the ocean: Selected works*. University of Hawaii Press, 2008.
- [14] H. K. Kapuni-Reynolds, "Ku'u Home 'O Keaukaha: He Lei Mo'olelo No Ka 'Āina Aloha (My Home, Keaukaha: A Lei of Stories for Beloved Lands)," University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2024.
- [15] C. Grant, B.-L. Bartleet, L. Barclay, J. Lamont, and S. Sur, "Integrating Music and Sound into Efforts to Advance the Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific: Case Studies from Indonesia, Vanuatu and Australia," *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 08/19 2021, doi: 10.1080/10286632.2021.1971206.
- [16] T. Alfred and J. Corntassel, "Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism," *Government and Opposition*, vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 597-614, 2005, doi: 10.1111/j.1477-7053.2005.00166.x.
- [17] A. Mbembe, "Necropolitics," in *Necropolitics*: Duke University Press, 2019.
- [18] G. Luque-Moya, "Toward a harmonic relationship between humans and nature: A humanist reinterpretation of early Confucian philosophy," *Asian Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 129-147, 2023.
- [19] D. B. Rose, "Dingo makes us human: Life and land in an Aboriginal Australian culture," (*No Title*), 1992.
- [20] R. M. Schafer, *The soundscape: Our sonic environment and the tuning of the world*. Simon and Schuster, 1993.
- [21] E. Raber, "A Cross-Cultural Approach to Vocal Music Therapy in Cancer Care, Development of a Method," 2021.
- [22] K. Anderson-levitt, "Ingold, Tim. Anthropology and/as education. xii, 94 pp., bibliogr. London: Routledge, 2018. £ 32.99," 2021.
- [23] A. Escobar, *Designs for the pluriverse: Radical interdependence, autonomy, and the making of worlds*. Duke University Press, 2018.
- [24] B. LaBelle, *Acoustic territories: Sound culture and everyday life*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2019.