

Dub Dystopia Vol 1

Various

Bandcamp DL

Curated and compiled by Manila based producer and cultural activist Camille Banzon, *Dub Dystopia Vol 1* is predicated on celebrating the rich sonic history of the Philippines. Banzon's position as head of Manila's Continuum Bass club nights has given her access to a fistful of her country's most innovative producers, and the compilation bristles with their brio and enthusiasm.

The brief for the album was simple: Banzon asked her chosen artists to dig into Filipino music archives and come up with fresh takes on traditional styles. Repurposing old music is nothing new, of course. But the key success of this compilation lies in illustrating how the crew mesh their fascination for UK-founded urban underground genres with their own cultural roots.

Working under her Ezzrei pseudonym, Banzon delivers the elegantly soulful "Sinta" using kubing (bamboo jaw harp) and agung (gong) samples over blissed out beats that tip a hat to early LTJ Bukem. Allives recycles sections of the Pinikpikan collective's "Una-Kaya" track to create a slab of funky post-dubstep, while Hundred Digits uses Filipino lullaby "Ili Ili, Tulog Anay" as a bridge to wade into even bassier waters.

With drum 'n' bass as a starting point, Bergamask and PHB's rework of the traditional Filipino love song "Matud Nila" is nifty and melodramatic, while RVCK lifts chunks from revered singer Celeste Legaspi's 1982 track "Sabado" to build a cool, clever update. Bergamask and PHB link up with Orbit for the ravey, clanging "False Anito", Thirstkid's proto-jungle contribution "Ginhawa Ni Kali" samples the palendag (bamboo flute) and s00thsyr's "Hiwaga" introduces percussive gong instrument the kulintang to the Amen break.

Early jungle and drum 'n' bass productions were shot through with clattering anarchy and debts to Jamaican dancehall. Nascent dubstep simmered with paranoia. Title aside, evidence of these traits is scarce here. However, the trove of ideas and sheer, naked inventiveness on show underline why Manila's beats and bass community deserves more attention.

Simon Coates