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**Island Loves and Landmarks; Songs from Hawai'i, Okinawa, and Sulu**

Panel: Performing Arts and Island Societies: Beyond State, Nation, and Empire

The claim that singing is an alternative—and sometimes heightened—medium of semantic communication has been frequently made. Provisionally accepting this observation as true, I look at two themes shared by song repertoires from three island cultures—the Kanaka Maoli of Hawai'i, the Uchinanchu of Okinawa, and the Tausug of Sulu—each located in the geographically extreme south of a contemporary nation, i.e. the United States, Japan, and the Philippines, respectively. The two themes appear to be major in island cultures. The preoccupation with love and its complexities, given geographical considerations, carry major implications for partnering, propagation, and wellbeing. The significance of landmarks (significant or favorite places) is particularly important to maritime cultures.

In addition to each culture inhabiting an insular archipelago, each possesses a vibrant maritime heritage that includes voyaging and warfare. Further each has unique aspects to its heritage, e.g. discovery (Kanaka Maoli), trade (Uchinanchu), and piracy (Tausug). As part of their collective histories, each was a sovereign entity conquered or absorbed by a foreign power, i.e. the Kingdom of Hawai'i by the United States, the Ryūkyū Kingdom by Japan, and the Sultanate of Sulu by the Philippines.

The paper examines selected songs about loves and landmarks from these three cultures. It looks for commonalities within these repertoires to suggest an island environment as a determinant to the creation of song. Additionally it recognizes the distinctive features of each culture, regardless of shared aspects of environment, heritage, or history.