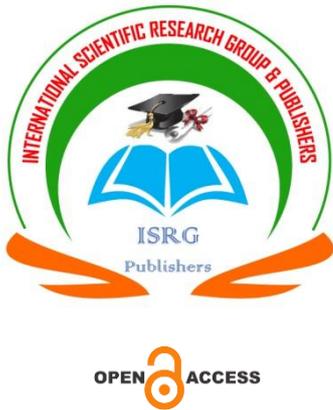


# ISRG JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND CULTURAL STUDIES (ISRGJHCS)



**ISRG PUBLISHERS**

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Humanit Cult Stud

**ISSN: 3048-5436 (Online)**

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/gjhcs/>

Volume – III Issue- I (January- February) 2026

Frequency: Bimonthly



## “DOCUMENTING THE *RAKA-IB* OF LINAMBAY THEATRICAL PLAY OF CARCAR CITY CEBU”

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| **Received:** 24.12.2025 | **Accepted:** 29.12.2025 | **Published:** 04.01.2026

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### Abstract

*Linambay, a Cebuano theatrical play that remains an important part of Carcar City's culture and identity despite its decline in modern times due to digital entertainment and a lack of preservation efforts. This study explored and documented Raka-ib, a notable linambay play written by Constancio Gantuangco in 1940, examining its historical background, narrative elements, cultural relevance, and preservation efforts. Using a Descriptive-Qualitative research design, the study gathered data through interviews, observations, and field notes with cultural practitioners and community members. Thematic and descriptive analyses were used to interpret the narratives and insights collected. Findings revealed that Raka-ib preserves essential Linambay elements including costumes, sword fight choreography, live music, and poetic dialogue. Three key themes emerged: namely Turning points, Testing times and Transformative thresholds. These themes reflect changing entertainment preferences, the financial and generational constraints and their efforts to revive and pass on the tradition to younger generations. The study concluded that despite the challenges of modernization, Raka-ib Linambay remains a living legacy to the Carcaranons' creativity, resilience, and pride in their heritage proving that culture may fade, but it never dies when the community chooses to remember and revive it. The study recommends LGU and NCCA led initiatives and integration of Raka-ib into cultural programs and school curricula to ensure its preservation and continuity as a vital expression of Cebuano cultural heritage for future generations.*

**Keywords:** *Raka-ib, Linambay, Documentation, Theatrical Play, Cultural Heritage*

## INTRODUCTION

Theatrical play has long been an essential medium for storytelling, cultural preservation, and artistic expression, reflecting the country's diverse cultural heritage and intricate history (Fajardo et al., 2023). Related studies revealed that traditional folk theater plays in the Philippines serve as a medium for portraying history, values, and the people's struggles and aspirations (Serquiña, 2019). In Carcar City, Cebu theatrical plays are a popular form of entertainment. One such theatrical tradition is *Linambay*, a Cebuano theatrical play from Carcar City, Cebu, traces its roots to the Spanish komedya, also called moro-moro (Padin & Canayong, 2019). Among the many *linambay* plays, *Raka-ib* stands out as a significant work written in 1940 by Constancio Gantuangco. However, despite its cultural value, *Linambay* has declined in modern times due to the rise of digital entertainment and the lack of preservation efforts. The last full *Linambay* performance was recorded in 1988 (Larossa, 2021), and while some scripts remain, they have yet to be formally documented or studied. Several studies have emphasized the cultural significance of *linambay* and the need for its preservation. Mojares (1985) traces Cebu's theater evolution, highlighting *linambay* as a community-centered art reflecting socio-political changes. Similarly, Mante (2014) highlights *linambay* as a traditional communal performance that once flourished in Cebu and nearby regions. These studies highlight the importance of documentation and academic inquiry to ensure that traditional forms like *linambay* remain accessible and appreciated by future generations. This study seeks to explore and document the *Raka-ib*, *Linambay* play in Carcar City, examining its historical background, narrative elements, relevance and process. By addressing the challenges facing its survival, this research aims to contribute to the preservation and promotion of Cebuano folk theater.

*Linambay* is a unique form of Cebuano drama traditionally staged in open spaces during town fiestas and community gatherings. It shares similarities with the Spanish komedya, often portraying battles between Christians and Moros, love stories, and heroic adventures. According to Mojares (1985), *Linambay* is an episodic play with repetitive formulaic sequences. The performances are known for theatrical sword fights, live musical accompaniment, and stylized choreography, serving both as entertainment and a medium for imparting moral lessons to the audience (Cañete, 2018). While *linambay* is widely recognized as a form of Cebuano drama and as part of Cebuano cultural tradition, it is most prominently rooted in Carcar City, Cebu, where it flourished from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Around 1940, the *Linambay* was staged almost every year (Mojares, 1985). Carcar became the heart of *linambay*, with local playwrights and performers shaping its unique artistic identity and establishing it as a vital component of the city's cultural life (Mojares, 1985). One notable example is *Raka-ib*, a *linambay* play written in 1940 by Constancio Gantuangco, is one of six *Linambay* plays he authored. It was written in 1940 and performed from April 7 to June 16 of that year. This play was simplified and presented in prose instead of the typical verse format. It deviated from the traditional Moorish-Christian conflict and eliminated the stylized and traditional musical cues. The play focused on themes of love, retaining only some traditional scenes of *linambay* (Padin & Canayong, 2019). This shift in narrative marked an evolution in the tradition, reflecting changes in artistic expression and audience reception.

Several studies emphasize the importance of traditional theater in cultural preservation and identity formation. Globally, Shirazi et al. (2016) highlight that the decline of live performances in favor of modern entertainment platforms threatens the survival of traditional art forms, a concern shared by scholars studying intangible cultural heritage. This global trend echoes in the Philippine context, where Alvarez (2014) emphasizes that folk theater reflects a community's values, beliefs, and history, making it an essential part of cultural heritage. In addition, scholars emphasize the role of folk and vernacular theater in reflecting societal values and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (Schechner, 2020; UNESCO, 2021). Similarly, Visaya (2016) observes that Philippine theater has increasingly become a sporadic activity, often limited to school-based theater groups, suggesting a broader national decline in public engagement with traditional performances. Supporting this, Mojares (2019) adds that the standardization of scripts in local languages can aid in the academic study and preservation of folk theater. Locally, Cebu's *linambay*—also known as moro-moro—is a Spanish-influenced vernacular comedy-drama that explores themes of good versus evil, Christian triumph, and love, and is known for its grand stage design, vibrant costumes, and live music (Padin & Canayong, 2019). While Mojares (1985) provides a foundational overview of *linambay*'s role within the historical and socio-political context of Barangay Valladolid, his study emphasizes colonization and urbanization effects on village life, neglecting a deep analysis of *linambay* as theatrical play and its regional continuity. Furthermore, although Mojares acknowledges *linambay*'s oral script tradition, he does not address how its unwritten nature affects preservation, accessibility, and educational use. This lack of written documentation has contributed to the gradual erosion of this cultural art form. As Tiatco (2015) underscores, revitalizing traditional performance requires not only academic and institutional support but also active grassroots engagement to ensure its survival and relevance for future generations. Thus, the need for focused documentation of *linambay*, particularly *Raka-ib* in Carcar City, remains urgent within the broader context of preserving Cebuano cultural heritage.

Despite the rich heritage of Cebuano drama, there is limited research on its preservation and relevance today. While many studies mention the decline of folk theater in the Visayas, few explore how these traditions survive in local communities. One such example is *linambay*, a vernacular theatrical form that once thrived in Carcar City. This study addresses a critical gap in the existing literature by focusing on *linambay*'s current relevance in Carcar, particularly among young Carcaranons, where it was once a celebrated theatrical tradition. In fact, the last recorded performances of the *Linambay* theatrical play in Central Visayas occurred in Bohol in 1976 and in Cebu in 1986. Additionally, according to Googie Larossa (2021), the last full *Linambay* performance was in 1988, yet some scripts still exist and have been passed down.

From the researchers initial interview with Ms. Johanna Grace N. Delos Reyes, the Head of the Tourism Office in Carcar, one reason for this decline is the growing popularity of modern entertainment like variety shows, which has pulled attention away from traditional performances. She also shared that the play has over a hundred characters, making it very hard to organize. The revival of *Linambay* was canceled due to its large cast and complex production, and the teachers and students from Barangay Valladolid withdrew because of time and resource constraints

(Delos Reyes, 2025). In addition, some Carcaranons recalled seeing Linambay perform at the Carcar Museum, fiesta celebrations and even in schools years ago. Carcar City recently won major cultural festivals like Sinulog sa Lalawigan 2024 and Sinulog sa Kabataan 2023, where elements inspired by Linambay were incorporated into their performances (SunStar Cebu, 2024; Rappler, 2023). Notably, Carcar has embraced Linambay-inspired themes in recent cultural performances to reflect its identity, yet lacks a deep understanding of Linambay, and its historical and theatrical essence is fading from public memory. This disconnect shows an urgent need for efforts in documentation, education, and preservation. As more young people turn to digital entertainment, fewer are exposed to traditional forms like Linambay. The absence of standardized linambay scripts in Cebuano further limits its accessibility for research and educational purposes, as it was being noted that Linambay scripts were based on oral tradition and not written down.

Understanding the cultural significance of Linambay is essential in preserving Cebuano heritage and promoting appreciation for local theater. This study is significant as it aims to document and analyze *Raka-ib, Linambay* to preserve its historical and artistic value. By highlighting the importance of *linambay*, this research seeks to contribute to cultural preservation efforts and promote a deeper appreciation for Cebuano folk theater. It also serves as a reference for scholars, educators, and cultural practitioners interested in traditional Philippine theater. Additionally, this study also aims to address how traditional performances like *linambay* can be adapted and sustained in modern society. This research seeks to provide an in-depth examination of how *linambay* has been transformed over time and how it can be revitalized to maintain its cultural and artistic relevance. Ultimately, revitalizing *linambay* is not just about preserving an art form, it is about ensuring that the stories, values, and heritage embedded in these performances continue to inspire future generations. The findings of this research can serve as a foundation for future projects that aim to integrate Linambay into cultural education, artistic preservation programs, and even modern theatrical adaptations. By understanding how traditional theater can coexist with contemporary forms of entertainment, this study offers a pathway for sustaining Cebuano heritage in the face of technological and cultural changes.

This study aims to describe the Raka-ib performance within the Linambay theatrical play of Carcar City and contribute to its documentation and preservation through written literature. By gathering insights from cultural practitioners and community members, the study seeks to record and better understand Raka-ib's significance and development over time. To accomplish this, the researchers will conduct interviews with individuals who have direct knowledge and involvement in Linambay performances. The study specifically seeks to answer the following questions:

- a. What are the nature and historical backgrounds of Raka-ib in the Linambay theatrical play of Carcar City?
- b. What are the key elements of the Raka-ib performance in Linambay in terms of:
  - Props and Costume,
  - Music,
  - Script,
  - Choreography, and
  - Staging?
- c. What are the prominent evolutions of the Raka-ib performance over time?

- d. What actions or initiatives are being done to preserve and continue the Raka-ib of Linambay?

## METHODOLOGY

### Design

The researchers employed a descriptive qualitative design to describe and explore the *Raka-ib*, a *Linambay* theatrical play in Carcar City. According to Furidha (2024), descriptive qualitative design was ideal for analyzing events, phenomena, or social conditions, providing deep insights into cultural and historical contexts. This method was well-suited for documenting, and capturing rich, detailed narratives from participants, allowing an in-depth understanding of the theatrical play's cultural and historical significance. The Descriptive qualitative design also allowed the researchers to maintain a close connection with the data, leading to a detailed understanding of participants' perspectives (Colorafi & Evans, 2016b). Through this approach, the study aimed to document the nature, elements, evolution, and current state of the *Raka-ib, Linambay* tradition, as well as identify ongoing efforts and challenges in its preservation and revitalization.

### Participants and Sampling Techniques

This study was participated in by the locals in Carcar City, Cebu specifically from Barangays Valladolid, Poblacion 1, and Calidngan. The selection of the participants was carried out through purposive snowball sampling (Dragan, 2013). The researchers believed that these two methods are the most appropriate to use for this study because they are allowed to select participants who meet the criteria and their participants can recommend other potential participants within the same field. The participants were required to meet the following criteria; (a) be residents of Carcar City, specifically from Barangay Valladolid, Poblacion 1, or Calidngan. (b) have experience performing in a *Linambay* theatrical play, whether as an actor, dancer, or musician; (c) have contributed to the production of a *Linambay* theatrical play in a non-performing role, such as a director, choreographer, scriptwriter, stage designer, or production manager; and (d) have actively participated in any aspect of *Linambay* theatrical productions, whether onstage or behind the scenes. The sampling strategy included key informants who suggested additional participants that fit these criteria, ensuring that those recruited possessed the necessary credentials and expertise to support the study's aims.

### Environment

The study was conducted in Carcar City, Cebu, specifically in Barangays Valladolid, Poblacion 1, and Calidngan. This setting provided an ideal environment for conducting an interview, as it enabled the comprehensive collection of extensive data, diverse perspectives, and meaningful insights relevant to the study. This was because theater had long been celebrated and played a significant role in Carcar City, Cebu (Padin & Canayong, 2019).

### Instrumentation

The main instrument of this study was the researchers themselves (Annie & Blair, 2012). Semistructured interviews, observation, and field notes served as the secondary tool (Mashuri, et. al., 2022). These interviews were conducted face-to-face. Additionally, direct observation was employed to capture real-time interactions, behaviors, and contextual elements related to the Raka-ib a *Linambay* theatrical play of Carcar City. This data collection method allowed participants to freely share their information,

insights, and ideas about the Raka-ib, a Linambay theatrical play of Carcar City. Each participant was guided by a set of open-ended questions created by the researchers designed to encourage reflection and elicit detailed, meaningful responses relevant to the study's objectives.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

#### **Before:**

Prior to the collection of data, the researchers will seek approval from the City Mayor to Prior to the collection of data, the researchers sought approval from the City Mayor to conduct the study within the community by submitting a formal request letter detailing its purpose, significance, and methodology. Upon approval, the researchers proceeded to the Barangay Captains for additional consent and coordination at the barangay level. Once the necessary permissions were secured, an approval letter was addressed to the adviser and presented by the researchers to authorize the study with the selected participants. This letter outlined key details, including the study's objectives, the number of participants, and the research timeline. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling methods. Identified participants received informed consent forms to ensure ethical compliance. Upon their approval, the researchers conducted interviews using a set of open-ended questions designed to encourage meaningful reflection and discussion

#### **During:**

The interviews were conducted through exchanged messages during face-face interviews. The responses were documented directly from the exchanged messages, allowing participants to share their insights verbally, and through written response through Google Docs. To ensure accuracy and completeness of the data the researchers asked permissions for audio recordings, and with the participant's consent, these recordings helped ensure that the data gathered were systematic and accurate.

#### **After:**

Upon completing the interviews. The researchers provided compensation to the participants as a form of appreciation for their involvement in the study.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study, the researchers utilized a qualitative approach, incorporating both thematic and descriptive analysis to interpret and provide an in-depth understanding of the collected data. The study aims to describe, document, and analyze Raka-ib Linambay to preserve its historical and artistic value. It also sought to explain its cultural significance, traditional elements, and evolving role in contemporary society, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of its impact and relevance. Thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed to identify patterns and themes in participants' responses. This process involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, and organizing them into broader themes. Moreover, after describing the Raka-ib *Linambay* theatrical play and the initiatives to preserve and continue the Raka- ib of Linambay, Descriptive Analysis complemented this by providing a rich, contextualized account of the Rakaib Linambay, documenting its key elements of the performance, and evolving significance over time. As noted by Sandelowski (2000), descriptive analysis was ideal for producing comprehensive summaries of events and experiences, staying close to the data to accurately reflect participants' perspectives accurately. Thus, the

researchers combined both methods to offer a balanced view, capturing both the meaning and the context.

### **Trustworthiness of the Study**

Member checking validated findings by allowing participants to review them for accuracy. Triangulation used multiple data sources to ensure consistency. Trustworthiness was ensured through Guba and Lincoln's (1989) criteria. The credibility of this research was strengthened through triangulation, which combined data from semi-structured interviews, historical references, and participant observations to analyze the Raka-ib, Linambay play. Purposive and snowball sampling methods ensured that the participants had firsthand knowledge, while member checking uses transcribed interviews for validation. Peer debriefing with the research adviser and colleagues helped minimize bias. Dependability was achieved through a documented research approach, systematic data collection, and an audio trail recording major decisions and coding procedures. Conducting interviews in Carcar City enhanced the study's relevance. Confirmability was maintained through reflexive analysis, proper storage of interview transcripts and field notes, and conclusions that were based strictly on participants' responses. Double-checking all details ensured objectivity. Transferability was supported by clear documentation the research context, participants, and methods. The study, which focused on exploring the Raka-ib, Linambay play in Carcar City, used recordings and field notes as credible sources. These findings allowed other researchers to assess the study's applicability to their own work.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The research study was conducted only after receiving approval from the university's Research Ethics Committee, ensuring complete adherence to ethical standards prior to gathering data. In compliance with the Data Privacy act of 2012, all participant's identities were protected using pseudonyms and secure data storage, as part of the ethical procedures, selected participants received informed consent forms outlining the study's goals, methods, risks, benefits, and right to withdraw their participation any time. The researchers took precautions to prevent inaccurate information and personal bias, and the interview guide was validated by experts to ensure courteous and unbiased questioning. Permission was acquired from Carcar City authorities prior to securing participant's written consent, which outlined their rights and the confidential management of their information. Possible risk such as cultural misinformation or emotional distress was disclosed, and psychological support was available, if necessary, while participants also benefited from perspectives on the cultural significance of the Raka- ib of Linambay Theatrical play. To ensure comfort and cultural respect, participants chose their interview time, location, and language. Participants were given contact details in case if they had any concerns, and confidentiality was strictly maintained with data only accessible by the researchers. Throughout the study, the researchers declared no conflict of interest, voluntary participation was emphasized and token of appreciation were given after interview.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the nature, background, elements and cultural significance of the Raka-ib Linambay play of Carcar City, Cebu, Philippines, as well as its role in preserving local heritage through simplified theatrical practice.

## Raka-ib Linambay Play

### Meaning:

The word *Linambay* was derived from the Cebuano term “*lambay*,” meaning a crab, referring to the sideways movements often performed during the sword fighting of the play. One of its stories was *Raka-ib*, considered a shorter version of Linambay. The title was derived from its central antagonist, a *conde*, whose character highlighted themes of leadership, bravery, and moral responsibility.

**Theater Culture:** Traditional Drama Theater

**Place of Origin:** Carcar City, Cebu

**Ethnolinguistic Group:** Carcaranons (Cebuano-speaking communities)

**Classification:** Folk Theater / Community Performance

**Performers:** Men and Women of the community, both young and old, often guided by experienced elders.

### Nature and Background:

The Linambay of Carcar City, Cebu, is a form of traditional theatrical play that flourished during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Linambay was a Cebuano-Visayan theatrical tradition popular in Carcar from the pre-Spanish era until the American period. It is a Cebuano adaptation of the *komedya* or *moro-moro*, originally introduced during the Spanish colonial period, which dramatizes conflicts between Christians and Moros and often include element of European play with the themes of royal encounters, and moral lessons. The word *Linambay* was derived from the Cebuano term “*lambay*,” meaning a crab, referring to the sideways movements often performed during the sword fighting of the play. Traditionally, Linambay was staged on a grand scale, performed over nine consecutive nights during town fiestas, with elaborate costumes, multiple stage levels, and a large cast of performers attracting audiences from neighboring provinces such as Bohol and Negros. According to the narrative *Valladolid the Old Town* written by Sofronio A. Gantuangco, Sr. (1986), this tradition was made possible through the efforts of respected community members in Valladolid, Carcar, who staged the play in honor of their patron saint, Sr. San Roque. Among them were Nyor Kayong Gantuangco, Nyor Pael Regis, Nyor Inting Regis, Nyora Inday Josefina Gantuangco, Nyor Imo Avila, Nyor Baroy Gantuangco, Tenyente Dencio Watin, Tenyente Olong Sagolili, Manong Amon Wakan, and others whose dedication brought honor and recognition to Carcar and its neighboring towns. In later years, one of Nyor Baroy’s sons, Tanciong (Constancio Gantuangco), became the leader of Linambay. He was elected president of the organization, wrote several linambay plays such as *Adelino*, *Aide Bella*, *Don Carolino*, *Raka-ib*, and more, and trained new actors to take the place of those who could no longer perform.

Within the tradition of Linambay, *Raka-ib* is one of its stories, written by Constancio Gantuangco in 1940. The play is considered a “shortened version” of Linambay, staged not in municipal-wide festivals but in barangay plazas, basketball courts, or open grounds, particularly in communities particularly in Valladolid and Poblacion I of Carcar City. Unlike the nine-night productions of Linambay, *Raka-ib* condensed performances into two or three nights, making it more accessible for communities with limited time and resources.

The name *Raka-ib* is derived from the central character of the play, the Conde Raka-ib, reflecting the common practice of naming

Linambay plays after their protagonists. As a figure of leadership, bravery, and moral responsibility, Raka-ib embodies the values that the play seeks to highlight. Scholars such as Padin and Canayong (2019) note that many Linambay plays share common themes, especially the Christian–Moro struggle mixed with comedy and improvisation. The *Raka-ib* follows this style but is set apart by its lighter mood, smaller scale, and stronger focus on humor.

### Elements

The *Raka-ib* version of Linambay theatrical play presents a distinct set of theatrical elements that reveal both continuity with tradition and adaptation to community realities.

### Props and Costumes

Raka-ib Linambay theatrical play costumes were intentionally simplified compared to those used in the grand Linambay plays. Costumes still reflected the contrast between the Moros and the Kristyanos, The Kristyanos were usually dressed in elegant and noble attire, featuring royal colors such as gold, blue, and black.



*Scenes from a Cebuano Linambay Revival, Northern Cebu 1971 (The Freeman Sunday Magazine, 1971). Cebuano Studies Center Library.*

These costumes often shimmered under the lights, using sequins, shiny fabrics, or beads locally called “lobitos” to reflect a sense of royalty and power.



*(courtesy Carcar Museum)*

The Moros, on the other hand, wore plainer outfits, commonly red garments or “bahag,” creating a sharp contrast with the refined

appearance of the Kristyanos. Raka-ib highlights Shakespearean inspiration, in which some of the costumes are noble like. In fact, this finding is supported by the study of Tingson (2010), who classified the Linambay in terms of authority structure and religious distinctions, wherein Christians were represented in black and dark royal costumes, while Moros were symbolized through red attire.

The King is portrayed in a dark royal coat with a sash adorned with medals, a crown, a cape, and boots, symbolizing power and sovereignty. The Queen complements this presence with a white gown embellished with jewelry, a beaded necklace, and a crown, embodying regal elegance that reinforces the majesty of the royal pair.



*King & Queen (courtesy of participant 4)*

The *Conde* is dressed in a white costume paired with a sequined vest, a sash, a cape, a headpiece and a sword, presenting a dignified appearance that balances elegance with authority. The *Condessa*, on the other hand, wears a white gown with puffed sleeves and a sash across her chest, a style that conveys both simplicity and grace while signifying her noble role.



*Conde & Condessa (courtesy of Carcar Museum)*

Props played a vital role in enhancing the performance. Among them, the swords stood out as a central element, remarkably, it was not just a stage prop but a real weapon.



*Swords (courtesy of Carcar Museum)*

Alongside with the swords, handkerchiefs were also used. Some linambay, larger-than-life figure, locally called as “*higante*” and even real horses were sometimes introduced to heighten realism and spectacle. In Raka-ib theatrical play, they just highlights the nobles and the palace, sword fighting and the theme of love.

### Music

Live music played a central role in the Raka-ib performance. Traditional instruments such as trumpets, drums, guitars, banduria, and harp were played by local musikeros, providing rhythm and atmosphere throughout the play. According to Tionson (2010), brass bands with instruments like drums, trumpets, clarinets, and saxophones often accompanied such performances, marking key moments such as grand entrances, royal processions, and climactic sword fights. Similarly, Mojares (1985) noted that in the Valladolid/Carcar neighborhood of Cebu, Linambay functioned as a form of community theater with a fiesta theme, where live music and rhythmic cues from local bands enhanced the overall spectacle. As the tradition evolved, marching bands were sometimes invited to provide music, bringing in popular rhythms that blended seamlessly with the traditional style. This adaptation kept the performances lively and connected with the tastes of the community.



*Musical Instruments (courtesy of Carcar museum)*

A distinctive feature of Raka-ib was the use of *balak*, a poetic verse delivered either in song or in declamation. In many scenes, the performers themselves sang their lines, engaging in a calland-

response style of dialogue accompanied by the live music. Padin & Canayong (2019), also explicitly mentions that Raka-ib performances integrated balak as a dramatic device, with dialogue delivered in verse and stylized declamation. This gave the play a lyrical and elevated style, turning conversations into rhythmic exchanges that heightened the drama, the blending of speech, song, and instrumental accompaniment gave the play a dynamic and engaging flow.

### Script

The script of Raka-ib was a shortened and more accessible version of the traditional Linambay play. While it preserved the use of Cebuano-Bisaya dialogue, the language often carried traces of archaic Bisaya words and Spanish loanwords, reflecting both heritage and colonial influence. The style of dialogue was described as “old Bisaya,” giving the play a formal, poetic tone distinct from everyday speech.

The structure of the script showed similarities to European-style plays, with acts and stage cues, but these were often condensed into practical forms to fit community performances. It was not only composed of spoken lines but also stage directions that instructed actors on entrances, exits, sword fights, and gestures. This combination of dialogue and directions made the script both a literary text and a performance guide.

Music and poetry were also embedded within the script. Original songs and balak (poetic verses) were inserted to indicate moments when live accompaniment was required. These musical notations guided both actors and musicians, ensuring smooth synchronization between dialogue, movement, and sound.

### Choreography and Movement Patterns

The choreography of Raka-ib is dominated by sword fights, forming the central movement patterns of the play. These battles followed repeated sequences: striking, parrying, advancing, and retreating, all performed with rhythm and dramatic timing. The movements were less about realism and more about theatrical display, designed to keep the audience engaged.

The very name *Linambay* has been linked to the movements of crabs (*lambay*), symbolizing rivalry and “crab mentality.” Before combat, performers often executed “lambay” gestures, slow and sideward in motion that set the pace of the scene. These gestures prepared both the fighters and the spectators for the dramatic action to come. Thus, choreography carried not only the action of battle but also symbolic meaning, reinforcing the cultural depth of the performance. Furthermore, Mojares, 1985, highlighted how Linambay motions and expressions are exaggerated and develop on a romantic scale.

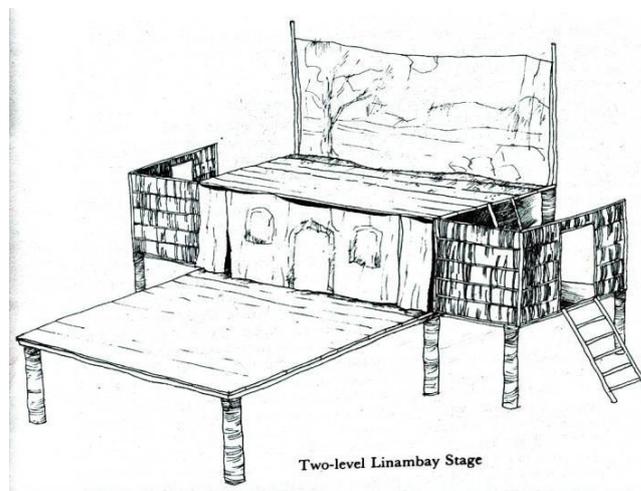


*Scenes from a Cebuano Linambay Revival, Northern Cebu 1971 (The Freeman Sunday Magazine) Cebuano Studies Center Library.*

Movement patterns also reflected social order on stage. Royal characters were usually positioned higher, moving with controlled and regal gestures, while warriors engaged in dynamic footwork and wide sword swings. This contrast emphasized status and hierarchy within the story.

### Staging

The staging of Raka-ib is notably simple and community-based. Performances are usually held in barangay plazas, basketball courts, or open grounds during fiestas and gatherings. A doublelevel stage was commonly used in Linambay performances. The upper level was reserved for royalty and nobles, while the lower level served as the space for sword fights and battle scenes. This stage design not only enhanced the dramatic effect but also symbolically reflected the societal class distinctions of the time. In 1940, the use of a two-level stage became popular in Linambay performances. This setup became the standard for most Linambay plays. However, the Raka-ib performance also adopted this arrangement, though in a simpler form.



*(Retrieved from Resil Mojares's Theater in Society, Society in Theater at the Cebuano Studies Center Library.)*

Also, a full stage is usually a two level-stage with main acting on the lower platform while the raised platform will serve as a balcony, tower or a mountain (Mojares, 1985). Minimal structures like towers or raised wooden platforms are occasionally built to represent royal spaces or serve as settings for dramatic scenes, such as death sequences. These structures are modest, tied together from wood, and dismantled after the fiesta. In addition, the decorations are often handcrafted, using palm leaves (*lukay*) or what we locally known as *salirap* for roofing and walls (Mojares 1985). Hand-painted backdrops of palaces, hills, or trees created by local artists. These details highlight the resourcefulness of the community. Importantly, staging is achieved through collective effort. Community members volunteer their skills, resources, and labor to construct the stage, underscoring the communal spirit of Raka-ib Linambay Play.

Audiences of Linambay would see the play either sits in the *palcos*, standing, squat on the ground and watching the same play. But Palco serve as the seat for those elites from Carcar. The Palco is what we call a sit for VIPs where major sponsors, notable families of Carcar, and directors would sit in the Palco for the whole play (Mojares, 1985).



*(San Roque Parish, Valladolid Carcar City)*

Linambay theatrical play was a communal celebration of Carcar City. It was traditionally held within around the San Roque Parish Valladolid, Carcar City in honor of its patron saint (Mojares, 1985). It shows how deep cultural and spiritual embedded to Valladolid's identity. Because of the faith and connection of the people in the community, the Linambay become a way to express their faith, and unite as a community.

### **Initiatives in Preserving the Raka-ib of Linambay Play**

After the interview the researchers analyzed the data, which revealed three major themes namely: Turning Points, Testing Times, and Transformative Thresholds. These themes highlight the reasons why the Raka-ib of Linambay Play of Carcar City evolved, the challenges posed by its sustainability and the ongoing efforts and initiatives to preserve its traditional theatrical significance.

### **Turning Points**

The evolution of Raka-ib theatrical play has significantly evolved mainly because it reflects a transition from traditional cultural practices to modern forms of entertainment. It was changed and shaped by societal progress and technological advancement. As society advanced, the younger generation lost interest in participating in any Linambay theatrical play because the younger generation nowadays are into technology, online entertainment dominates the youth hence traditional cultural activities are declining.

### **Emergence of Technology**

The rise of technology was consistently emphasized by several participants. For them, one of the reasons why Raka-ib theatrical Play evolved and declining due to the emergence of technology. Several youths nowadays are less interested in time-consuming activities, they frequently aim for instant gratification and interactive kinds of entertainment that the technology offers. One key informant shared their perspective:

*“Mga batan-on ron kay advance na kaayo (youth today are very advanced). Ang ilang kalingawan nagsalig na sa advance nga teknolohiya, lahi ra gyud kaayo sa amoang panahon sauna (their entertainment relies on advanced technology, which is very different from ours in the past).”*

This statement implies that youth today are being characterized as technologically advanced and are dependent on technology. The rapid growth of technology has reshaped the values, behaviors and entertainment of youth compared to the previous generation. Unlike from the past where entertainment was rooted in cultural performances such as Linambay Theatrical Play, today's youth prefer online entertainment. This result supports the study by Singh (2022) which found out that youth today are not really into old

traditional ways of entertainment or live cultural entertainments, their sources of entertainment are shaped in new media platforms.

The emergence of technology such as television, cinema and other modern forms of entertainment has significantly altered the field of traditional cultural entertainment such as Raka-ib Linambay Theatrical Play. Another key informant said:

*“Tungod sa pag-uswag sa teknolohiya, nanggawas na ang mga sinehan ug uban pang kalingawan*

*(Because of technological advancement, cinemas and other forms of entertainment have emerged).*

Mao nga hinay-hinay nang nawala ang kanindot o importansya sa Linambay *(That's why Linambay has slowly lost its beauty and significance).*”

This statement reflects a change in terms of entertainment platforms. It reflects a transition from a traditional form of theatrical performance to modern entertainment. The participant emphasizes modern technology particularly cinema which have been a key factor in the evolution or decline of traditional cultural performance Raka-ib Linambay theatrical play's cultural relevance. In historical context, the popularity of Linambay was later on replaced by the emerging entertainment forms in the mid- 20th century (FilipiKnow, 2022).

### **Generation Gap**

Evolution of the Raka-ib Linambay Theatrical Play is linked to the broader changes of the community's social and cultural landscape. Several participants emphasized the values, discipline, practices and tradition that gradually changed over time and shifted across generations. Highlighting the role of generation gap in this transition, showing how the evolution of the Raka-ib Linambay Theatrical Play is impacted by generation gap. Gaspar et al. (2021) support this idea, performers in older generations have strict training and traditional values in order to deliver the play with utmost authenticity unlike younger generations. One key informant said.

*“Ang kabatan-onan karon kulang sa disiplina, interes, ug propesyonalismo, dili pareha sauna nga mas propesyonal ang mga tigulang.(Youth lacks discipline, interest and professionalism as the older generation). Kung magpraktis gani ang mga batan-on para sa away tabak, dali ra kaayo sila masuko*

*(if youth practice for sword fights they will easily get angry.)”*

Several participants observed that the youth are easily agitated and impatient during rehearsals. Since during sword fights in Raka-ib Linambay theatrical play requires a real sword for practice and in actual performance, there is a need for discipline in handling such roles and in performing the movements and mock fights. In contrast, the older performers demonstrated dedication, tolerance, and reverence for the art form. This result supports the study of Padin & Canayong (2019) that sword fighting in the play is portrayed realistically. That is why actors need discipline, practice, patience and professionalism should be maintained.

To summarize, the first theme, turning points, reflects how the Raka-ib of Linambay Theatrical Play of Carcar City changed as it transitioned from traditional communal performance to modern entertainment which affects its cultural relevance. Technological advancements and changes of interests among youth has a major

impact of its decline in participation. It marked a turning point in fading cultural relevance of Linambay.

### Testing Times

With the following change and evolution of the Raka-ib Linambay theatrical play. The researchers found out that it has been challenged by several changes. Participants highlighted the evolution of the Raka-ib Linambay theatrical play often challenged by various factors such as financial constraints, loss of creators or writers, and other cultural contributors who really play a vital role in sustaining and protecting the Raka-ib Linambay theatrical play.

### Financial Constraints

One key challenge mentioned by most of the participants is financial constraints. Theatrical plays must have collective funds to ensure that the funds are allocated fairly for the theatrical play because the productions require financial support for it to be successful (Musa et al., 2025). One participant shared their perspective.

“Ang kakulang sa pinansyal nga pondo adunay dakong papel niining kausaban tungod kay nagkinahanglan kini ug pinansya alang sa produksyon.” (*Financial constraints play a bigger role in this change because it needs finance in production*)

It reveals that financial constraints have a big impact on the changes observed in the Raka-ib Linambay Theatrical Play of Carcar City. The participant emphasized the importance of financial support to traditional theater play. The result aligns with the study of Musa et al. (2025) that the biggest problem faced by small theater groups is not having enough resources and financial support. Without adequate funding of the Raka-ib Linambay theatrical play, it struggles to provide support to maintain the relevance of most of Linambay theatrical plays. As a result, this limits the presentation of Linambay theatrical plays and are declining. With this another participant shared their view.

“Gikan sa dagkong audience ug dagkong produksyon sauna (*From a bigger audience and bigger production before*), karon naa na lang kini sa baryo nga presentasyon.” (*now it's in barrio presentation.*)

Most Linambay theatrical plays were played in bigger productions staged for larger audiences with lavish staging. Before, Carcaranons gather just to see linambay plays in Valladolid Carcar City because it was part of their village tradition and later became a dominant theater form in the Carcar City (Sabanpan-Yu 2014). This result was evidence in the study of Mojares (1985), that the history of Linambay shows an important part of social and ritual life in Valladolid Carcar, highlighting how it serves as an event for the public that brought the community together.

### Lesser Cultural Practitioners

Several participants emphasize that the old age, passing away of directors, writers and performers has left a significant impact on cultural transmission across generations. This highlights the vital role of the cultural practitioners and their cultural knowledge and skills on guiding young generations to sustain and preserve the Raka-ib Linambay Theatrical play. One participant shared their perspective;

“Usa sa mga nakapahinay sa kalamboan niini mao ang pagkamatay sa mga direktor ug pipila ka bantugang manunulat” (*One contributing factor to its decline was the passing away of the directors and some notable writers.*)

The findings reveal that lesser cultural practitioners have a significant effect on the continuity of the Raka-ib Linambay Theatrical play. These individuals serve as a key role in transmitting cultural tradition that ensures its preservation across generations. Some of the Linambay writers are getting old and there are some who pass away. This supports the study of Padin & Canayong (2018) that the loss and lesser of key writers and performers threatens its continuity. The absence of Linambay writers, directors, actors and other contributors of Linambay explains why some of the Linambay scripts are not fully transcribed and lacks details of stage directing Sabanpan-Yu, H. (2014).

From the findings, it can be inferred that the Raka-ib Linambay Theatrical Play is striving to survive due to various of challenges that it faced. Financial constraints and lesser cultural practitioners not only hinder the production quality but also weakens cultural transmission across generation, testing its resilience to preserve its cultural origin and artistic identity.

### Transformative Thresholds

From the analysis of participant's narratives, they emphasized reintroduction of Linambay, particularly the Raka-Ib Linambay theatrical play. It refers to the cultural efforts in order to sustain, preserve and pass on this tradition to future generations despite the challenges brought by modernization, financial constraints and evolution of the community's social communal activities.

With the deliberate efforts to be made in order to sustain and revive performances of Linambay especially Raka-ib Theatrical Play. Several participants emphasize the need for reintroduction of Linambay among youth especially for carcaranon's youth because Linambay is not that known for some young Carcaranons (Padin & Canayong, 2019). One of the participants expressed:

“Para nako, angay kini nga ipaila ug hatagan og higayon nga maapil kini nga kultural nga dula sa kurikulum sa swkelahan aron mahibal-an usab sa mga estudyante.” (*For me, it should be reintroduced and have a chance to apply this cultural play in the curriculum where students are aware.*)

In order to preserve and sustain the Raka-ib Linambay Theatrical Play is through inclusion of the curriculum. Through integrating it in their curriculum it can serve as a medium in order for the local youth to recognize its relevance in their community's culture and tradition and value their own tradition. Inclusion of folk music, theater and arts in the curriculum will help to support and keep the tradition alive and make the student connect to their own culture and identity (Addo & Adu, 2022). As Pañares and Cabangon (2016) emphasize the importance of Drama, particularly theatrical forms, are integral in every Filipino's lives. Therefore, Raka-ib Linambay theatrical play be integrated and introduced into subjects such as English and MAPEH (Pañares & Cabangon, 2016).

The result of this study highlights the interrelation of three emerging themes namely: Turning Points, Testing Times, and Transformative Thresholds which collectively reflect the evolution and initiatives of the Raka-ib Linambay Theatrical Play in Carcar City. The study reveals thae initiatives in order to sustain the relevance of Linambay. The first theme, turning points highlights the need to recognize the modernization and rapid growth of technology have shifted cultural communal activities, prompting initiatives that encourage cultural awareness through digital documentations and promotion of Linambay performances in local

communities. Secondly, the necessity to support the production of the play. The call for collaborations and community-based funding, partnerships with LGUs to improve sustainability of production and improve the skills of cultural practitioners. Lastly, integrating Linambay into the school curriculum and cultural programs to foster youth appreciation and to reintroduce local community tradition.

## CONCLUSION

The Raka-ib Linambay is a dying cultural tradition which reflects Carcar City's rich history, artistry and community life and it's evident in this Shakespearean-inspired folk play which showcases stories of love, conflict, and moral lessons. However, due to modernization, digital entertainment, and lack of resources tends to be neglected by the younger generations. Despite these, they were able to remain this through reintroducing this Raka-ib play through cultural programs and strong institutional support. Through these initiatives, Raka-ib has a chance to remain and pass not just for entertainment but also the culture and values of Carcaranons.

## RECOMMENDATION

According to the results of the present study, the Raka-ib Linambay theatrical of Carcar, Cebu needs to be preserved, revived, and academically acknowledged. It is suggested that the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Carcar should be in the lead of promoting the play and it should also be integrated into cultural projects and community-based events that put emphasis on local heritage. In addition, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) ought to offer a formal protection and ensure the integrity of the play by granting its copyright and by ensuring that it is not abused or misused by anyone. Moreover, the play is highly recommended to be institutionalized in the educational curriculum: in basic education as part of Music and Arts, in tertiary education as part of Art Appreciation and in part of the Bachelor of Culture and Arts Education (BCAEd) course at Cebu Normal University. Thus, future researchers are recommended to document musical compositions or repertoire of Linambay theatrical plays. This kind of integration will both enhance the appreciation and knowledge about Cebuano culture among students and also guarantee the continuation of this traditional form of art to the generations to come.

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