Maria Clara Suite

updated 01-Jul-2002

The coming of the Spaniards in the 16th century brought a new influence in Philippine life. A majority of the Filipinos were converted to Roman Catholicism. European cultural ideas spread and the Filipinos adapted and blended to meet the local conditions. These dances reached their zenith in popularity around the turn of the century, particularly among urban Filipinos. They are so named in honor of the legendary Maria Clara, who remains a symbol of the virtues and nobility of the Filipina woman. Maria Clara was the chief female character of Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*. Displaying a very strong Spanish influence, these dances were, nonetheless, "Filipinized" as evidence of the use of bamboo castanets and the *abanico*, or Asian fan. Typical attire for these dances are the formal Maria Clara dress and barong tagalog, an embroidered long-sleeve shirt made of pineapple fiber.

Alcamfor

*(ahl-kahm-FOHR)*
From Leyte comes this couples dance in which the girl holds a handkerchief laced with camphor oil, a substance which supposedly induces romance.

Andaluz

*(ahn-dah-LOOHS)*
Also known as Paseo de Iloilo, for its province of origin, this is one of the most sophisticated courtship and flirtation dances of the Spanish era. The gentlemen compete among each other to win the heart of the *dalaga*, or young lady, by exemplifying chivalry, grace, and confidence.
Aray

MIDI File (aray.mid)
(ah-RAHY)
A dance whose words are sung in "Chabacano-ermitense," a hybrid of Spanish that was only spoken in the Ermita district before the turn of the century and today is extinct. The dance itself is a flirtatious one that involves graceful use of the pañuelo, or shawl, and tambourines. Aray means "ouch" in Tagalog.

Balse

(BAHL-seh)
Derived from the Spanish "valse" (waltz), this dance was popular in Marikina, Rizal province, during the Spanish times. Balse was performed after the lutrina (a religious procession), and the music that accompanied the dancers was played by the musikong bungbong (musicians using instruments made of bamboo).

Cariñosa

MIDI File (carinosa.mid)
(kah-reehn-YOH-sah)
This flirtatious dance is known throughout the Philippines. Cariñosa means affectionate, lovable, or amiable. With a fan or handkerchief, the dancers go through hide-and-seek movements and other flirting acts expressing tender feelings for one another. There are many versions of this dance, but the hide-and-seek movements are common in all.

Chotis

(CHOH-tees)
The Chotis (or "Shotis") was one of the ballroom dances learned by the Filipinos from the early European settlers. This dance, from Camarines Sur, has been adapted by the Bicolano people and is characterized by a brush-step-hop movement.

Escopiton Malandog

(ehs-koh-PEEH-tohn-mah-LAHN-dohg)
According to legend, two boys named Esco and Piton introduced this dance during the inauguration of the founding of San Jose de Buenavista. Eventually the dance was called Escopiton. This beautiful dance originated from Malandog, a barrio of Hamtic in Antique.
Estudiantina

MIDI File (estudia.mid)

(ehs-tooh-deeh-ahn-TEEH-nah)
A very lively and gay dance. During the old days, this dance was a favorite in social gatherings and was performed by the estudiantinas, women who were students of private schools and colleges in Manila. They are seen holding a book in one hand throughout the dance.

Habanera

Audio sample (habanera.wav)

(hah-bah-NEH-rah)
A wedding party dance which originated in the town of Botolan in the Zambales Province. Typical sequences include the procession of the bride and groom's parents, lineup of the bridesmaids and groomsmen upstage, and a solo featuring the wedding couple.

Imunan

(eeh-MOOH-nahn)
A courtship dance of Ilokano origin. A beauty enters for an afternoon promenade with her suitors. At the end of the dance, the lovable and charming lady cannot select from any of her suitors.

La Jota

(lah-HOH-tah)
The jota encompasses a variety of Spanish-influenced dances accompanied by the use of bamboo castanets, held loosely and unstrung. There are many forms of jota in the Philippines whose names are derived from their regions of origin. A common progression in the jota is a quick & lively verse, followed by a slow bridge, and ending with a verse in the same lively tempo as in the beginning.

Jota Española

Highlighted by castanets, abanicos, and tambourines.

Jota Gumaqueña

Once very popular among the well-heeled families of Gumaca, Tayabas (now Quezon). A well-known local musician at the time, Señor Herminigildo Omana, introduced this dance. It became popular with the young people and was handed down between generations.
Jota Manileña (Manila)

It originated in the capital city around the 19th century.

Jota Moncadeña (Moncada, Tarlac)

Audio sample (moncaden.wav)
A combination of Spanish and Ilocano dance steps and music.

Jota Pangasinana (Pangasinan province)

(pahng-gah-seeh-NAH-nah)
Demonstrates the flair of stomping feet culminating with the cry of "Olé!"

Jota de Paragua (Cuyo, Palawan)

(pah-RAH-wah)
Displays a Castillan influence with Zapateados (footwork), Lobrados (arms), and Sevillana style of dress. The ladies wave their mantón, or decorative shawl, while the gentlemen keep brisk pace with bamboo castanets.

Jovencita

(hoh-vehn-SEEH-tah)
A dance typical of a woman's debut or even her wedding. The accompanying love ballad was written by Maestro Nitoy Gonzales when he was courting Jovita Friese, who then choreographed the graceful and beautiful habanera dance that accompanies it. Jovencita means "young lady" in Spanish.

Lanceros de Negros

(lahn-SEH-rohs-deh-NEHG-rohs)
During the Spanish time, this dance was one of the popular quadrille dances in the Philippines. It is similar to the stately Rigodon de Honor and is danced in important social affairs to formally open a big ball. One version from Silay, Negros Occidental, is performed in a lengthwise formation.

Mazurka Boholana

(mah-ZOOR-kah-boh-hoh-LAH-nah)
This dance is a traditional ballroom dance popular in Bohol and in other provinces during the Spanish times.
Panderetas

*(pahn-deh-REH-tahs)*
This dance, named after the jingle-less tambourines carried by the females, originates from Tanza, Iloilo. From December 16 to January 6, a group of people in the Visayan regions go from house to house to sing Christmas called "Daigon." In some regions the song is usually followed by some dances, and "Las Panderetas" is one of those dances.

Paseo de Iloilo

*(pah-SEH-oh-deh-eeh-loh-EEH-loh)*
see Andaluz

Paso Doble

*(PAH-so-DOH-bleh)*
Meaning "two-step," the name is actually a misnomer, as it is an ordinary walking or marching step called the "one-step." The term refers to the stirring marching music played as background music at bullfights and fiestas throughout Spain.

Polkabal

MIDI file (polkabal.mid)
*(POHL-kah-bahl)*
A dance influenced by two distinct European styles: polka and valse.

Putritos

*(pooh-TREEH-tohs)*
A festival dance from Atimonan, Tayabas (now Quezon province), featuring a couple's flirtatious and playful interaction. It is danced in alternating slow and fast waltz tempos and culminates in a vivid twirling sequence by the girl.

Rigodon de Honor

*(reeh-goh-DOHN-deh-oh-NOHR)*
This elegant dance was brought to the Philippines by the Filipinos who returned from their travels abroad during the Spanish era. This dance takes its name from its opening performances at formal affairs such as the President's Inaugural Ball. Members of government, including the President and First Lady, diplomatic corps, and other state officials usually participate in the Rigodon. Traditionally, a ballroom waltz dance would follow the Rigodon.
Sabalan Lulay

*(sah-BAH-lahn-LOOH-lie)*
The dance "Lulay," like the kuratsa, jota, pandango, and polka, is performed in many parts of the Philippines. This dance originated from Malamig barrio of the town Gloria, Oriental Mindoro. It is part of a wedding ritual which has four phases: *sabalan, pamalaye, sabog* and *dapit.* The dance begins with the gentleman dancing around his partner as she eventually gives in to dancing with him.

Saguin-Saguin

*(SAH-geehn-SAH-geehn)*
From the Bicol region comes this courtship dance which tells the story of a lumberyard owner, who threw a dance for his workers. A girl who was related to one of the workers was offered to the owner as a dance partner. He took to her very kindly, and eventually serenaded her.

Timawa

*(tih-MAH-wah)*
Meaning "forsaken lover," Timawa is a courtship dance, usually performed by women, and is originated in Lamot, a barrio in Capiz. The story recounts of a man and a woman, both *timawas,* who met at a social gathering and became acquainted with each other. In the course of their conversation, they discovered that they both had the same misfortune; therefore, turning to each other for sympathy and comfort.

Mountain/Igorot Suite
updated 28-Jun-2002

The mountainous Central Cordillera region of Northern Luzon is also known by the term "Philippine Skyland." Inhabiting this rugged terrain are six ethno-linguistic tribes known as the Ibaloy, Kankanay, Ifugao, Kalinga, Apayao, and Bontoc. They prefer to be called by their respective tribal names rather than the collective term Igorot, which was first used by the Spaniards and later by Christian lowlanders. These tribes were generally unfazed by Spanish colonization. This homogeneous group is recognized by their common socio-cultural traits. They hold common religious beliefs, generally nature-related, and make propitiatory offerings to anitos, or household gods. Among these people of the Cordillera, dance continues to be an expression of community life that animates the various rituals and ceremonies. It serves for self-edification of the performers and entertainment for the spectators. They dance to appease their ancestors and gods to cure ailments, to insure successful war-mating activities, or to ward off bad luck or natural calamities. They dance to congregate and socialize, for general welfare and recreation, and as an outlet for repressed feeling. They also dance to insure bountiful harvests, favorable weather, and to mark milestones in the cycle of life.
Apayao Courtship Dance
(ah-pah-YAHW)
This dance comes from the northernmost section of the Mountain provinces. Here, the couple raise and wave their arms and hands like the wings of a bird in flight, and the ceremonial blanket worn by the woman is lightly wrapped around her. The man's movements resemble those of a fighting cock in the preening, strutting, and flying-off-the-ground gestures.

Banga
(bahng-AH)
Igorot maidens go to the river and prepare for a marriage ceremony. They display not only their grace and agility, but also their stamina and strength as they go about their daily task of fetching water and balancing the bang, claypots full of water, on their heads.

Bangibang Funeral Dance
(bahng-EEH-bahng)
On the occasion of a violent death, the Ifugao community proceeds to the house of the deceased. The men shake their spears and shields and continually hop or jog all along the way, while some mean strike resonant sticks called bangibang. When they reach the house, they all shout "Ha-ha-gui-yoo," circling around the victim and even striking him, urging him earnestly to take his revenge. Both men and women are adorned with the red leaves of the dongla plant, symbolic of war.

Bindian
(BIHN-deeh-ahn)
The Ibaloy who inhabit the southernmost mountain regions in Northern Luzon perform victory dances to extol the bravery of the warriors of yesterday. In this version from the barrio of Kabayan, hand movements are downward, suggesting the people's affinity with the earth. The basic step consists of a stamp by the left foot and a light, forward movement by the right. Instrumentalists lead the line, followed by male dancers, while the female dancers bring in the rear.

Bontoc War Dance
See Pattong.

Bumayah
(booh-mah-YAH)
Thanksgiving festivals are one of many occasions for tribal celebrations. The movements in this dance of the Ifugao tribe, imitating those of a rooster scratching the ground, symbolize a thanksgiving prayer to the god Kabunian for a bountiful harvest of rice. Both men and women express their joy in this thanksgiving.
**Bumbuwak**  
(BOOHM-booh-wahk)  
The Gaddang live in the middle of Cagayan Valley and speak a language similar to Ilokano. Most of them converted to Christianity, and those who live alongside Christianized Ilokano groups have more or less adjusted to settled agriculture of mixed crops. Small and scattered groups in southeastern Kalinga, eastern Bontoc, and Isabela regions retain their indigenous religion and practice swidden agriculture (the cutting back and burning of existing vegetation to produce temporary farming plots) with supplementary hunting and fishing. In this dance, the Gaddang imitate birds attracted to tobacco trees.

**Chumnu**  
(CHOOHM-nooh)  
Originated from the outpost municipality of Benguet, this female dance is performed at celebrations of tribal victory and to give thanks for a bountiful harvest.

**Dinuyya**  
(dih-NOOH-yah)  
A festival dance from Lagawe, it is performed by the Ifugao men and women during a major feast. Accompanying the dance are three gangsa or gongs: the tobtob, a brass gong about ten inches in diameter and played by beating with open palms, and the various hibat or gongs played by beating the inner surface with a stick of softwood.

**Idaw**  
(eeh-DAHW)  
This Bontoc dance depicts a war ceremony performed by warriors of rivaling tribes. Idaw, meaning "bird," is celebrated because it was the omen bearer of war.

**Lepanto Festival Dance**  
(leh-PAHN-toh)  
This dance is performed the Kankanay of northern Benguet and the people of Western Bontoc. It is usually danced at wedding celebrations (when it signifies the well-wishing of the bride and groom) and also after a harvesting season, when thanksgiving is rendered to Benguet god Kabuniyan for the bountiful harvest of the year.

**Kayaw**  
(kah-YAHW)  
The most revered tradition within the Kalinga is headhunting. A budong or peace pact is made between ili or village clusters to maintain peaceful relations and security. Breaking this pact by causing blood to flow will inevitably result in kayaw or headhunting. The offended village has the right to raid their transgressors and indiscriminately taking as many heads as they can as trophies. Mangayaw or listening to Idao, a mysterious bird, is supposed to lead a group to a successful head hunt.
**Lumagen**

*MIDI File (lumagen.mid)*

(loo-MAH-gehn)

This is a dance performed at Kalinga festivals to celebrate Thanksgiving.

---

**Manerwap**

(MAH-nehr-wahp)

In times of severe drought, the Bontoc would perform this pagan ritual imploring Kabunian (God) to open the sky and allow raindrops to water the rice terraces and the mountains. Participants in the Manerwap climb the mountain to reach a sacred place called fawi where they offer a piece of meat and some rice wine to God. Tribal folk rule that participants in the Manerwap must be physically strong to withstand the fast required during the rites, when they're allowed only water and no food. Senior members of the tribe perform the rain dance for two days and two nights, incessantly beating gongs throughout the vigil.

---

**Manmanok**

(mahn-mah-NOHK)

Three Bago Tribe roosters compete against each other for the attention of Lady Lien. They use blankets depicting colorful plumes to attract her.

---

**Palakis**

(pah-LAH-keehs)

This courtship dance originates from Western Bontoc and is usually performed at weddings and during festivals like the begnas, celebrated by the community before a harvest or planting. The dance is characterized by free-form interactions between male and female dancers, with each dancer carrying a square-meter piece of brightly colored cloth, held or shaken to convey sentiments such as flirtation or desire. A set of four gongs accompanies this dance.

---

**Pattong**

(PAH-tohng)

Also called the Bontoc War Dance, Pattong is part of the headhunting and war ceremonials inciting feelings of strength and courage as the warriors prepare to stalk their enemy. In Central Bontoc, the dance is also performed in February, March, and April, to implore the god Lumawig to send rain, similar in purpose to that of the rain-calling ceremony of Native American tribes. Much of the movements are improvised; two camps of warriors are usually featured pursuing each other, culminating in a melee where a fighter from one tribe kills one of his opponents.

---

**Ragragsakan**

*MIDI file (ragrags.mid)*

(rahg-rahg-SA-H-kahn)

This is an adaptation of a tradition in which Kalinga women gather and prepare for a budong, or peace pact.
Sakpaya  
(sa-hk-pah-YAH)  
The calloused hands of Ifugao farmers dig the hard soil and push heavy stones off cliffs to make way for a new rice field, part of the world-famous Banaue rice terraces. High-flying sakpaya birds swoop and hover over the terraces as the Ifugao toil. In times of plenty, the Ifugao farmers give thanks to their sakpaya "gods" by donning traditional costumes and imitating their flight in this dance.

Salip  
(SAH-lihp)  
The Salip of the Kalinga tribe depicts a warrior claiming his bride by presenting her with a matrimonial blanket. The woman responds by balancing several clay pots upon her head. She follows the man to connote obedience. He simulates the movements of a rooster at love play, aspiring to attract and seize his love. A version of this dance has two warriors competing for the approval of the fair maiden.

Tachok  
(tah-COH-k)  
When the Kalinga gather to celebrate a happy occasion like the birth of a first-born baby boy, a wedding, or a budong (peace pact), the Kalinga Festival Dance is performed. This is danced by the Kalinga maiden. The dance imitates birds flying in the air. Music is provided by gangsa, or gongs, which are usually in a group of six or more.

Takik  
(TAH-kikh)  
The Bontoc tribe performs this flirtation-type dance with five or more male dancers who provide music and rhythms for a male dancer and a female dancer doing a love or courtship dance. The dancers are in single-file forming circular or spiral patterns, and are led by the male dancer, who is immediately followed in the circular path by the chief gongbeater, who usually displays steps more fanciful than those of the rest of his fellow gongbeaters. At one point, he holds his foot sideward in the air, in an eloquent pause.

Takiling  
(tah-KEEH-ihng)  
Kalinga men chant and dance while beating gangsa (brass gongs) and leap around. This is part of the colorful religious ritual of thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest.

Uya-uy  
(OOH-yah-OOH-Y)  
This is an Ifugao wedding festival dance accompanied by gongs and is performed by the affluent to attain the second level of the wealthy class. Wealthy people who have performed this dance are entitled to the use of gongs at their death.
Rural/Barrio Suite

updated 01-Jul-2002

Perhaps the best known and closest to the Filipino heart are the dances from the rural Christian lowlands: a country blessed with so much beauty. To the Filipinos, these dances illustrate the fiesta spirit and demonstrate a love of life. They express a joy in work, a love for music, and pleasure in the simplicities of life. Typical attire in the Rural Suite include the colorful balintawak and patadyong skirts for the women, and camisa de chino and colored trousers for the men.

Bagol

(BAH-gohl)
Children at play with a stringed coconut shell clasped between the "fingers" of their toes.

Basulto

(bah-SOOHL-toh)
From Victoria, Tarlac, comes Basulto, a love song presented in satirical form. This dance of Pampango influence is usually performed with the accompaniment of the song. One verse of the song is sung, then a figure of the dance is performed. The singing and dancing are done alternately.

Bayluhan

(bahy-LOOH-hahn)
In Malabon and Navotas, part of the Bulacan province, childless women who missed making the annual pilgrimage to Obando await the return of their friend who went to Obando's annual fertility festival. Upon their return, they recreate this dance of fertility.

Binasuan
This colorful and lively dance from Bayambang in the Pangasinan province shows off the balancing skills of the dancers. The glasses that the dancers gracefully, yet carefully, maneuver are half-filled with rice wine. Binasuan, meaning "with the use of a drinking glass" in Pangasinan, is often performed as entertainment at weddings, birthdays, and fiestas.

**Binatbatan**

An occupational dance from Paoay, Ilocos Norte, Binatbatan depicts the beating of cotton pods to separate the seeds from the fibers with the use of two sticks called batbat in the Ilocos region. Weavers in Paoay often engage themselves in abel-making contests (abel is a cloth common among the Ilokano). Dancers maneuver in and out of parallel batbat sticks, each about 18 inches long. The rhythm and speed of the beating of the sticks make for a lively and colorful display.

**Binoyugan**

A dance from the Ilokano region of Pangasinan, Binoyugan features women balancing on their heads a banga or clay pot which they use to fetch water from the river or well, or in which to cook rice. The dance culminates with the women laying stomach down on stage, and rolling from side to side, all while balancing the pot.

**Gaway-gaway**

Originating from a small town of Leyte called Jaro, children celebrate a beautiful harvest of the Gaway root crop. They imitate the pulling of the stalks, hitting their elbows in a movement called Siko-Siko.

**Itik-itik**

Audio sample (itikitik.wav)
At one baptismal party in the Surigao del Norte province, a young lady named Kanang (the nickname for Cayetana), considered the best dancer and singer of her time, was asked to dance the *Sibay*. She became so enthusiastic and spirited during the performance that she began to improvise movements and steps similar to the movements of *itik*, the duck, as it walks with short, choppy steps and splashes water on its back while calling to its mate. The people liked the dance so much that they all imitated her. There are six separate foot sequences in the series of *Itik-Itik* steps.

**Kalapati**

*(kah-lah-PAH-tee)*

The dance from Cabugao, Ilocos Sur province, symbolizes peace and is represented by imitating the movements of a graceful dove. It portrays the typical traits of the Ilokanos: simplicity, naturalness, and shyness.

**Kalatong**

[MIDI File (kalatong.mid)](kalatong.mid)

*(kah-lah-TOHNG)*

This dance is named after the three-foot bamboo implement suspended around the neck or waist. It is beaten in fast rhythm to bring good luck and to drive away evil spirits.

**Kandang-Kandang**

*(kahn-DAHNG-kahn-DAHNG)*

This animated wedding dance derived its name from a plant which grows along Dao beach in Antique. It is usually performed by the parents of the bride and groom during the wedding feast.

**Kilingkiñgan**

*(KEEH-lihng-KEEHNG-yahn)*
Kilingkiñgan is a small bird that flies swiftly and lives in caves. As it flies, it produces a peculiar sound resembling that of bamboo castanets struck together. This dance is popular among the Ibanag country people of Cagayan province. It is danced in any social gathering and is usually performed to the accompaniment of sinco-sinco, a five-stringed guitar found in Cagayan. The dance performed to a lilting 2/4 style.

**Kuratsa**

MP3 file (kuratsa.mp3 - 1.81MB)  
MIDI File (kuratsa.mid)  
(kooh-RAH-chah)  
A dance originating from Bohol, Visayas, it is popular at Ilokano and Visayan festivals. This dance commands a sense of improvisation which mimics a young playful couple's attempt to get each other's attention. It is performed in a moderate waltz style.

**Maglalatik**

MP3 file (maglalatik.mp3 - 1.74MB)  
MIDI File (maglalat.mid)  
(mahg-lah-lah-TIHK)  
This mock-war dance, originating from the Spanish Regime, depicts a fight between the Moros and the Christians over the prized latik, or coconut meat residue. This dance, originally performed in Biñan, Laguna, is also performed as a tribute to the patron saint of farmers, San Isidro de Labrador. Maglalatik is a four-part performance: the palipasan and the baligtaran showing the intense combat, and the paseo and the escaramusa, the reconciliation. The Moros of this dance usually wear red trousers, while the Christians don blue trousers. All of the men use harnesses of coconut shells positioned on their backs, chests, hips, and thighs.

**Oasiwas**

MIDI File (oasiwas.mid)  
(wah-SEE-wahs)
After a good catch, fishermen of Lingayen would celebrate by drinking wine and by dancing, swinging and circling a lighted lamp. Hence, the name "Oasiwas" which in the Pangasinan dialect means "swinging." This unique and colorful dance calls for skill in balancing an oil lamp on the head while circling in each hand a lighted lamp wrapped in a porous cloth or fishnet. The waltz-style music is similar to that of Pandanggo sa Ilaw.

**Palu-Palo**

*(PAH-looh-PAH-loh)*

In Laguna, the village labanderas, or washerwomen, spend a relatively calm day doing their laundry when tsismis, or gossip, among them gets out of hand, and drama ensues. Through fighting with their palos (laundry paddles) to resolve their disputes, their dance comes to life.

**Pandanggo na Tapis**

*(pahn-DAHNG-go-nah-TAH-peehs)*

In the olden days, a woman's sapeuy, or skirt, is incomplete without a tapis, a rectangular apron. The dancer depicts the different uses of tapis: courtship, flirtation, decoration, protection, wrapping, and driving the birds away from the rice fields.

**Pandanggo sa Ilaw**

*MP3 file (pandanggo.mp3 - 1.54MB)*
*MIDI file (pandango.mid)*

*(pahn-DAHNG-go-sah-EEH-lahw)*

This popular dance of grace and balance comes from Lubang Island, Mindoro in the Visayas region. The term pandanggo comes from the Spanish word fandango, which is a dance characterized by lively steps and clapping that varies in rhythm in 3/4 time. This particular pandanggo involves the presence of three tinggoy, or oil lamps, balanced on the head and the back of each hand.

**Pateado**

*MIDI File (pateado.mid)*

*(pah-teh-AH-doh)*
This couples-dance, from Balimbing, Marinduque, features the male partners performing acrobatic movements, such as bending backwards to pick up a hat from the floor using only his head. This is combined with characteristics of the pandanggo to make for a lively exhibition.

**Regatones**

*(reh-gah-TOH-nehs)*

During the early days, the *regatones*, or traveling fish vendors, together with women fish buyers called lab-aseros used to wait for the arrival of fishermen in the long and bountiful shoreline in the town of Cadiz, now Cadiz City, Negros Occidental. They would sprint towards the banca to select and purchase the fish they would like to sell. The regatones sell the fish with the aid of two *paraka* (a shallow rounded basket made of bamboo) attached to both ends of a long flat bamboo strip, or *tuwang-tuwangan*, balanced on the shoulder. While waiting for the fishermen to arrive, the *regatones* and women fish buyers tease each other by doing some simple dance steps such as leaping over the *tuwang-tuwangan* and tricks in maneuvering their *tuwang-tuwangan* with the *paraka*.

**Sakuting**

Audio sample *(sakuting.wav)*

*(saH-KOOH-teehng)*

A dance of the Ilokano Christians and non-Christians from the province of Abra, Sakuting was originally performed by boys only. It portrays a mock fight using sticks to train for combat. The stacatto-inflected music suggests a strong Chinese influence. The dance is customarily performed during Christmas at the town plaza, or from the house-to-house. The spectators give the dancers *aguinaldos*, or gifts of money or refreshments especially prepared for Christmas.

**Sapatya**

*(saH-PAHT-yah)*

This dance, from Manibaug barrio, Porac, Pampanga, is usually presented by the farmers during the planting season as an offering for a good harvest. Its name, according to the elders of the region, must have
been derived from the word Zapateado, a dance introduced in the Philippines by the early Spanish settlers. The dance is usually accompanied by a corrido, or musical narrative.

**Sayaw sa Bangko**

**MIDI File (sayaw.mid)**

*(sah-YAHW-sah-bahng-KOH)*

This dance is native to the barrio of Pangapisan, Lingayen, Pangasinan, and demands skill from its performers who must dance on top of a bench roughly six inches wide.

**Sinulog**

*(sih-NOOH-lohg)*

Sinulog is a ceremonial dance performed by the people of San Joaquin, Iloilo, during the feast of San Martin. It originated in a barrio of San Joaquin called Sinugbahan. It was believed that the image of San Martin was found at the edge of a beach, and that it could not be removed until the people dance the Sinulog. From that day on, every November 10th on the feast of San Martin the Sinulog would be danced before the procession comes out or else, it was believed, the church would be burned. The dance itself was patterned after the Sulu war dance of the Sulu people, the native name of Sulu being Sulog which means strong ocean currents.

**Subli**

**MIDI File (subli.mid)**

*(sooh-BLEEH)*

From the province of Batangas comes this ancient dance, originally performed in veneration of the holy cross of Alitagtag, referred to in the vernacular as Mahal na Poong Santa Cruz. The word *subli* is derived from two Tagalog words, *subsub* (stooped) and *bali* (broken). Hence, the men are stooped throughout the dance and appear to be lame and crooked, while the women dance with hats.

**Tinikling**

**MP3 file**

**Enhanced MIDI File (tinik2.mid)**

**Original MIDI File (tiniklng.mid)**

*(tih-NIHK-lihng)*

Honored as the Philippine national dance, Tinikling is a favorite in the
Visayan islands, especially on the island of Leyte. The dance imitates the movement of the tikling birds as they walk between grass stems, run over tree branches, or dodge bamboo traps set by rice farmers. Dancers imitate the tikling bird's legendary grace and speed by skillfully maneuvering between large bamboo poles.

**Tinolabong**

*(teeh-noh-LAH-bohng)*

A favorite dance of the mountain people of the barrios of Panitan and Loctugan, Capiz. The dance imitates the movement of the tolabong bird, a long-necked, long-winged heron which rides atop a carabao while picking insects off its back.

---

**Southern Mindanao Suite**

*updated 25-Feb-2008*

[Home](#)

Almost one million Pilipinos are Muslims who reside primarily in the southern island of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. By the end of the 12th century, traders and settlers from the Malay Peninsula and Borneo introduced Islamic faith to the islands. The Muslims in the Philippines, also known as Moros, were able to resist Spanish conquest. Thus, they preserved the Islamic lifestyle that markedly differs from the majority of the Philippine population. The ethno-linguistic groups who are primarily considered Muslim are the Maranao, Maguindanao, Samal, and Tausug. The dances are characterized by vivid colors and rhythmic movements which reflect the influence of Arabian and Indo-Malaysian cultures.

**Asik**

*(ah-SIHK)*

A solo slave dance performed by the umbrella-bearing attendant to win the favor of her sultan master. Asik usually precedes a performance of [Singkil](#).

**Ipat**

*(EEH-paht)*

The pag-ipat (deliverance) is believed to be a pre-Islamic ritual which survives to this day because of the compulsion of the Asal (traditional ancestry) which binds particular families to hold it during illness of a family member. The Maguindanao traditional worldview holds that diseases are caused by tonong (ancestral spirits) who need to be appeased. Thus, a folk healer performs the pag-ipat while being possessed by the tinunungan (spirit). The
ritual may be performed for a day, seven days, or a fortnight, depending on the patient's illness and economic status. It is an activity where the entire community participates.

Kapamalong-malong

(KAH-pah-MAH-long-MAH-long)  
Also called Sambi sa Malong, this Maranao dance shows the many ways of donning the malong, a tubular circle of cloth used as a skirt, shawl, or mantle.

Kapit Tendong

(kah-PEEHT-TEHN-dohng)  
A Yakan ribbon dance, featuring a tendong (ribbon) attached to a stick. Dancers manipulate these into various shapes that represent the motion of waves, birds, and snakes.

Katsudoratan

(kaht-sooh-doh-RAH-tahn)  
Katsudoratan depicts a royal manner of "walking" among the Maranao people who live mainly around Lake Lanao. Ladies of the royal court perform this stately dance in preparation for an important event. The bright colors and flowing handkerchiefs add to the drama of the dance.

Langka-baluang

(LAHNG-kah-BAHL-wahng)  
This dance creates the illusion of an angry monkey, and is always performed by male dancers. The popularity of this dance comes naturally, since the baluang, or monkey, enjoys an affectionate place in Asian folklore.

Paunjalay

(POWN-jah-lahy)  
A pre-nuptial dance of the Yakan tribe of Basilan performed by the bride and groom prior to their wedding ceremony in the langal or church. Both of their faces are dotted with white paint, to hide their identity from evil spirits.

Pangalay
A popular festival dance in Sulu, it is performed in wedding celebrations among the affluent families. They may last for several days or even weeks depending on the financial status and agreement of both families. Dancers perform this dance to the music of the *kulintangan*, *gabbang*, and *agongs* during the wedding feast.

**Pangalay ha Agong**

Two Tausug warriors vie for the attention of a fair maiden using their *agong* (large, deep, brass gongs) to show their prowess and skill.

**Pangalay ha Pattong**

Also called Pangalay Pangantin, this is a wedding dance from Sisangat, Siasi. Its name refers to the bridal curtain which shields the dancing *d'nda pangantin* (bride) from her *l'lla pangantin* (groom). The dance is highlighted by the bride flicking the *janggay* (metal claws) attached to her fingers, one at a time. As soon a claw falls to the floor, the attentive groom retrieves it until the whole set can be returned to the bride for safekeeping.

**Singkil**

This dance takes its name from the bells worn on the ankles of the Muslim princess. Perhaps one of the oldest of truly Filipino dances, the Singkil recounts the epic legend of the "Darangan" of the Maranao people of Mindanao. This epic, written sometime in the 14th century, tells the fateful story of Princess Gandingan, who was caught in the middle of a forest during an earthquake caused by the *diwatas*, or fairies of the forest. The criscrossed bamboo poles represent the trees that were falling, which she gracefully avoids. Her slave
loyally accompanies her throughout her ordeal. Finally, she is saved by the prince. Dancers skillfully manipulate *apir*, or fans which represent the winds that prove to be auspicious. Royal princesses to this day in the Sulu Archipelago are required to learn this most difficult and noble dance.

There are other versions of Singkil. Perhaps the version more widely performed by dance companies is the "Garden Singkil." The story goes that the princess goes into her garden, accompanied by her slave, and plays with the butterflies, which are represented by the fan dancers. The movements of the fans supposedly represent those of the butterflies, as opposed to the diwatas. In another popular version, the prince uses a scarf instead of a sword.

**Tahing Baila**

(TAH-hihng-BAHY-laah)
This dance of the Yakan people depicts the sea-faring people imitating the movements of fish.

**Tauti**

(TAHW-teeh)
From Tawi-tawi comes this occupational dance, which vividly portrays the labors of catching *tauti*, or catfish. The first version is performed solo and depicts the trials of a lone fisherman attempting to catch the tauti. The second version has a principal dancer with two accompanying performers who assist in paddling the canoe and baiting. In both cases, the fishermen wrestle with the tauti en masse and ultimately get pricked by their poisonous spines. They ultimately catch a few fish, but not without suffering major pain.

**Vinta**

(VIHN-tah)
Also called Pangalay ha Pattong, this dance is named for the picturesque boat with colorful sails which glide across the Sulu Sea. Central to this dance are the Royal Couple who each balance atop a pair of swaying bamboo poles, simulating their ride aboard a vinta.

**Yakan**

(yah-KAHN)
The Yakan are a group of sea-faring people from the island of Basilan in the Sulu Archipelago, as well as offshore islands of the Zamboanga Peninsula. Although they are considered Muslims, some of their beliefs and practices are nonetheless animistic in nature. Because the sea is an integral part of their daily lives, this dance personifies the ocean through sweeping, languid movements. In one version of this dance, the men travel on their knees alongside the women's sweeping arm sequences, in interpreting the movement of the sea.

**Tribal Suite**

*updated 01-Jul-2002*

Pockets of cultural minorities live in the style of their forebears in the hills and mountains throughout the Philippine Archipelago. The hillside and interior of Mindanao in the southern part of the Philippines are inhabited by non-Christian Filipino tribes whose culture and animistic beliefs predate both Islam and Christianity. Dance for them is a basic part of life, still performed essentially “for the gods.” As in most ancient cultures, unlike the Muslim tribes in their midst, their dances are nonetheless closely intertwined with ceremonials, rituals, sacrifice, and life.

**Anito Baylan**

*(ah-NEEH-toh-BAHY-lahn)*
The Mansaka are a group in Davao for whom music and dancing remain primary sources of entertainment. Their dances are characterized by the rhythmic movement of the knees, feet, arms, and hands. In this dance, from Samal Island, a male spirit healer and a female medium preside over a complex healing ritual, which includes the sacrifice of a chicken. This healing ritual assumes an aura of pageantry, evident in the waving of palm fronds and rhythmic movements of flickering lights.
Binaylan

(bih-NYE-lahn)
The Bagobo tribe from the central uplands of Mindanao originated this dance which imitates the movement of a hen, her banog, or baby chicks, and a hawk. The hawk is sacred, and it is believed that the hawk has the power over the well-being of the tribe. The hawk tries to capture one of the chicks and is killed by the hunters.

Blit B’laan

(bliht-bih-LAH-ahn)
A courtship dance of the Bilaan of Davao del Sur imitating forest birds during the mating season. Two richly-plumed male birds eye three female birds. The females scurry to safety, burying their heads under their wings (represented by the malong, a tubular cloth), but the aggressive males follow them wherever they go.

Dumadel

(dooh-mah-DEHL)
A festival dance performed by the Subanons to celebrate a good harvest.

Dugso

(DDOOHG-soh)
The Bukidnon from northeastern Mindanao perform this dance as an entertainment for the deities, to make them feel more comfortable during the fiesta that has been organized for them and consequently more open to the requests of the celebrants. It was originally thought that this dance was performed only during harvest time or upon the birth of a male heir. Women would wear colorful feathered head dresses, plaid costumes and anklets. They would step rhythmically around a bamboo arch decorated with newly-gathered palay (rice stalks) and corn, and their movements are emphasized by the tinkling sounds from the anklets.
Mandaya

(mahn-dah-YAH)
The Mandaya (from man = "man", daya = "upriver") live in the southeastern uplands of Davao and form the largest ethnic group in southeastern Mindanao. Sociopolitical organization is headed by a headman belonging to a warrior noble class called bagani, whose power and authority are mitigated by a council of elders called angtutukay. In one dance, the Mandaya, swooping to a drum beat, imitate the movements of eagles.

Kadal Tabaw

(KAH-dahl-TAH-bahw)
A bird dance performed by the T'boli during planting and harvesting which simulates the flights and hops of the tabaw bird.

Pandamggo

(pahn-DAHM-goh)
The Talaingods are a group near Davao del Sur believed to stem from the Manobo tribe. They are animists, and dancing and music-making characterize weddings and other religious festivals. This Talaingod dance, performed to the beat of four drums by a female, portrays a virgin-mother bathing and cradling her newborn baby, named Liboangan. She supposedly had a dream, or pandamggo, that she was to bear such a child. This concept of a virgin-birth may have been derived from the Catholic faith. The dance progresses through different stages of the child's growth, from birth to maidenhood. As a young woman, she must deal with competing suitors, one of whom is favored by the mother. A heated encounter between the suitors ultimately results in their death.

Pangalitawo

(pahng-AH-lee-TAH-woh)
From the Subanon tribe of Zamboanga del Sur in Mindanao comes this courtship dance, typically performed during harvest time and other social gatherings. The female holds shredded banana leaves in each hand, while the male wields a kalasay, a type of shield.

Pagdiwata

(pahg-dee-WAH-tah)
The Tagbanuas of Palawan perform this dance to show gratitude for a good harvest and to implore continued protection and favor from the deities.
**Sekuting**

*(seh-KOOH-tihng)*
A mock-duel dance of the Baluga tribe in Zambales and Pampanga, Sekuting may well have been the precursor to the rural *Sakuting* dance. Two pairs of men with sticks start out this dance from their kneeling position, advancing from knee to knee. Then, standing up and hitting each other's sticks, each member of the paired dancers encircle each other, as they clash in a very lively melee-dance sequence.

**Slaong Kinibang**

*(SLAH-ohng-keeh-NEEH-bahng)*
The T'boli's headgear with unique and original ways of wearing for travel and farm work protect the T'bolis from the glare of the sun.

**Sugod Uno**

*(sooh-GOHD-OOH-noh)*
From Davao del Norte, the Bagobo tribe prepares the cleansing of the spirit and planting of their next crop.

**Tagabili**

*(tah-gah-BEEH-leeh)*
The Tagabili (also called T'boli) are a minority national group from South Cotabato, in southwestern Mindanao, who is comparatively sophisticated in language, dress, and mythology. One performance of this tribe narrates a story about a datu, or prince, who is cursed for killing his brother in jealously over one of his wives. The datu's daughter is to be wed by a likely suitor, but dies as a result of the curse. In rage, the datu sets his village in flames.

**Talapak**

*(tah-LAH-pahk)*
The Manobo tribe of the headwaters of the Pulangi Rive in southern Bukidnon have dances which are closely influenced by the neighboring Matig Salug. They have
dances which portray daily activities such as nocturnal hunting for edible frogs and snakes, hunting of birds and wild boar, and activities connected with the rice cycle. The Manobo use a tool called a *talapak*, which consists of a long stick with its lower end pointed and its upper end attached to a bamboo clapper about a foot in length. Every time the pointed end of this stick strikes the ground to make a hole, the bamboo clapper makes a sound which has a double purpose - to scare off crows or sparrows that might steal the newly-sown seeds and to call the attention of the field spirits which are believed to become attracted by the sound produced. The occupational dance of the same name is performed during the actual sowing of the rice seeds in order to make this back-breaking task fun and lively.

**Talbeng**

*(TAHL-behng)*
A dance performed by the Baluga (Negrito) of Nabuklod Settlement in Florida Blanca. Each dancer mimics and mimics familiar animals like the woodpecker, monkey, fly, etc. Exceptional are the gleeful attitudes they take towards life's gifts. A guitarist is accompanied by striking wood, bamboo, or stone. They play and dance as well.

**Talgki**

*(TAHLG-keeh)*
The Bilaan (also called B'laan) tribe of Southern Cotabato and Davao belong to the same ethnic group as the Manobos, Tagabilis, and Kalayans, but differ in language, theory of creation, and ceremony. They perform this courtship dance, a prototype of the *Tinikling*. As two bamboo poles open and clash in the rhythm of the *Singkil*, the male dances in every possible stance, weaving in and out of the clapping bamboo poles; while upright on his feet; on all fours facing the sky, and so forth. All of these acrobatics are performed to impress the maiden he is courting.

**Tamingan**

*(tah-MIHNG-ahn)*
In this Tagbanua martial dance, the *taming* (shield) is held in front to cover and protect the upper portion of the body, while the feet make lively travelling steps, and the
sword makes quick forward thrusts at the unseen enemy.

**Tumahik**

*(TOOH-mah-hihk)*

Males of the Yakan tribe, indigenous to Basilan island, practice their fighting skills in this mock war dance which employs movements borrowed from Southeast Asian martial arts. Typical maneuvers include traveling on the knees, quick tumbling, and high kicking.

**Udol**

*(ooh-DOHL)*

From the Tagakaulo tribe of southern Davao comes this ceremonial dance which portrays death and revenge. It opens with three women walking in with votive candles, mourning the loss of a relative. They are followed by men playing the udol, a long wooden musical instrument. The woman make eloquent gestures of tenderness and despair such as wielding a spear and pounding the udol in anger, countering the steady rhythms of the musicians. A male priest then dances, begging the spirits to guide the soul of the deceased. Finally, two warriors enter, spears in hand, performing a frenzied dance in a circle, then disappearing off stage "to the woods," apparently to secure the heads of their enemies.