Native Filipino Stringed Instruments

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updated January 19, 2011

Different parts of the Philippines influenced various stringed instruments. Traditional stringed instruments in the Philippines include lutes, zithers and violins carved from bamboo as well as guitars influenced by the Spanish, who colonized the islands. The Philippines is made up of many groups, who often name and decorate instruments differently. While only about 10 percent of the country's population still use these instruments in everyday practice, the instruments are considered an important part of the Philippines' cultural heritage.

1. **Boat-Lute**
   - Perhaps the Philippines' most well-known traditional stringed instrument, the boat-lute commonly found in Maganoy, Maguindanao, has many names across the islands. Usually, though, it is called kudlung in the south and kudyapiq in the north. Carved from one piece of soft wood in a boat shape, it is a two-stringed instrument about 1 to 2 meters long and technically very difficult to master. It is usually played with a small wooden pick to accompany singing and dancing.

**Bamboo Zither**

- The traditional Philippine zither is made from bamboo. A bamboo zither is made from a single piece of bamboo, and bamboo skin fibers are used as strings. The bamboo is 3 to 4 inches in diameter and has nodes on the end. Wedges placed underneath the strings act as frets--tension points that create different sounds. Other Filipino names for this instrument include the kolsing, kalshang and the tawgaw.
Spanish Guitars

- Philippine guitars are similar to Spanish guitars.

The banduria, laud and octavina are Philippine instruments created with an influence by Spanish guitars. The Philippine banduria is similar to a mandolin but has 14 strings. The round-bodied laud is tuned one octave, or eight notes, lower than a banduria and has F-shaped holes instead of one round hole. An octavina has 14 strings and is essentially a laud shaped like a guitar. A pick is used to play all these instruments.

Bamboo Violins

- Some Philippine bamboo instruments are played with a bow instead of plucked. European-style violins of the Philippines include the biyulin, or gologod, and the onabir, or nabir. Each has one section of bamboo closed off with nodes at both ends and three strings made of steel or pineapple fiber. The instruments are played with a bow made from bamboo and abaca fiber. A spike fiddle of the Bilaan is called the duwagey.