Philippine Music Instruments
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Music instruments, mechanisms that produce sounds, have been used for various purposes. In earlier times they were also used as an adjunct to dance or to labor. In later civilizations, instrumental music was used for entertainment. Present day musicological studies, following the Hornbostel-Sachs classification, divide instruments into the following categories: idiophones, aerophones, chordophones, and membranophones.

**Idiophones**

Instruments that produce sound from the substance of the instrument itself (wood or metal) are classified as idiophones. They are further subdivided into those that are struck, scraped, plucked, shaken, or rubbed. In the Philippines there are metal and wooden (principally bamboo) idiophones.

Metal idiophones are of two categories: flat gongs and bossed gongs. Flat gongs made of bronze, brass, or iron, are found principally in the north among the Isneg, Tingguian, Kalinga, Bontok, Ibaloi, Kankanai, Gaddang, Ifugao, and Ilonggot. They are most commonly referred to as *gangsa*. The gongs vary in size, the average are struck with wooden sticks, padded wooden sticks, or slapped with the palm of the hand. Gong playing among the Cordillera highlanders is an integral part of peace pact gatherings, marriages, prestige ceremonies, feasts, or rituals.

In southern Philippines, gongs have a central profusion or knot, hence the term bossed gongs. They are three of types: (1) sets of graduated gongs laid in a row called the *kulintang*; (2) larger, deep-rimmed gongs with sides that are turned in called *agung*, and (3) gongs with narrower rims and less prominent bosses called *gandingan*. These gongs may be played alone but are often combined with other instruments to form various types of ensembles.

Bamboo idiophones abound in the Philippines-xylophones, drums, quill-shaped tubes, stamping tubes, scrapers, buzzers, and clappers.

The bamboo xylophone, *gabbang*, is found in southern Philippines among the Yakan, Sama, Tausug, and Palawan. It consists of bamboo keys of graduated lengths mounted on a trapezoidal box. The number of keys varies among the different ethnic groups, ranging from 3 to 22. In northern Luzon, among the Kalinga, individual xylophone-like blades called *patatag* are struck with bamboo sticks.

The bamboo slit drum, such as the Bukidnon *bantula* is fashioned out of a bamboo tube closed at both ends with anode with a slit cut out of the tube. Found among different groups of people, its main use is to announce important events.

The struck quill-shaped bamboo tubes with notches etched on the tube, are found only in southern Philippines such as the Maranao *tagutok* and the Maguindanao *kagul*. The player scrapes the notches with a bamboo stick.

Among the Cordillera highlanders, bamboo buzzers are widespread. They are made from a length of bamboo closed with a node at the bottom, with its top half shaped so that two tongues face each other. The top half is struck against the palm of the hand. They are known by different names such as *balingbing*, *pew-pew*, *pakkung*, *bilbil*, *bungkaka* by the various groups.

The Ifugao have a bamboo clapper, *hanger*, fashioned from a tubular section of bamboo, split from one end to approximately half of the tube. Each half of the split portion is shaped to make it narrower in the middle, thus making it more flexible when the halves are made to flap against each other.
Wooden idiophones include sticks, suspended logs, and log drums. The Hanunuo *kalutang* consists of pair of sticks cut from forest trees. These are struck against each other and played while hiking through forest and mountain trails.

The Ifugao *pattung* is a percussion yoke bar made from a tapered piece of wood and struck with a stick. It is used in ceremonies for the sick, at rites which entail the offering of sacrificial pigs, or at death rituals.

Suspended logs are widespread in southern Philippines where they are known by different ethnic names. The Maguindanao *luntang* consists of several logs of varying lengths hung in order from longest to shortest. The pointed playing ends of each log is struck by one performer creating a melody against which another performer beats drone rhythm on one of the logs.

The Tagakaolo *edel* is a sounding board with resonator played during wedding celebrations together with a drum or gong to accompany dancers. The Bagobo and Bilaan have similar drums.

Jews harps are bound all over the Philippines. They are principally made from bamboo although in Philippines some are made of metal. It is a type of mouth resonated instrument consisting of a flexible tongue fixed at one end to a surrounding frame. The player places the free end of the instrument with the hand, or in some other types by pulling a string attached to the blade. The instruments have different names among the various ethnic groups. In the south the most common term is *kubing*, in the north *ulibaw*.

**Aerophones**

Philippine bamboo aerophones include various types of flutes, pan-pipes, and reed pipes. The most widespread and numerous are the flutes which are mostly end-blown with the air stream directed into the open end of the tube.

The lip valley notch flute, so called because of its mouthpiece which is obliquely cut and curved at a slant to follow the contour of the player's lips, is found in northern and southern Philippines. They are known by different names among the different linguistic groups, such as the *paldong* in the south and the *palendag* in the north. They are instruments of leisure, used for serenading, courting, or merely to pass the time away.

The nose flute, another type of end-blown flute, is found mostly in northern Philippines where the Kalinga call it *tongali*, the Bontok *kaleleng*, and the Ifugao *ungjung*. It is found sporadically in some areas of the south among the Hanunuo (*lantuy*), the Batak (*lantoy*), and the Bukidnon (*bulaktob*). The Cuyunin of Palawan have gigantic nose flutes with tubes much larger in diameter than those found in Luzon.

Less common flutes are the ring type called *suling* in southern Philippines; the whistle type called *thumpong* (Subanun); and the reed called *saunay* (Tausug).

Stopped pipes found in northern Philippines are the *saggeypo* (Kalinga) and the *sagay-op* (Bontok). The bamboo pipe is closed on one end by a node with the open end held against the lower lip of the player as he blows directly across the top. The pipe can be played individually by one person or in ensembles of three or more.

Less commonly used today is the bamboo panpipes called *diwas, diwdiwas, or dew-dew*. These consist of a number of bamboo pipes (5-8)strung together.
Most Philippine transverse flutes are adaptations or imitation of European versions evident in the borrowed names such as **flauta** (Ilonggo, Sebuano, Bicol); **plawta** (Manobo) and **palawta** (Hanunuo, Waray). The Cuyunin use a transverse flute called **tipanu** which is also found among the Batak of Palawan.

Other blown instruments are those made from shell or carabao horn. These are used for calling people or sending messages over wide distances. Shell trumpets include the **budong**, **lungga**, **taburi**. Carabao horns are the **tambuli** (Tagalog) and **kogao** (Ifugao).

**Chordophones**

These are bamboo or wood stringed instruments that may be struck, plucked, or bowed. They included zithers, lutes, and bowed strings.

Philippine zithers have resonating bodies that are made from bamboo tubes or half tubes with strings that run parallel to the length of the tube. Tube zithers are found in northern Luzon, Mindanao, and Palawan. They are of two types: polychordal zithers with several strings that run around the tube, and parallel stringed zithers which have two strings on one side of the tube.

Polychordal tube zithers found in the Cordilleras, Mindanao and Palawan have strings that are etched out of the bamboo body, remaining attached at both ends. Small wooden frets are inserted beneath the string near the ends. The number of strings varies from 5 to 8 or 9 and occasionally even 11. Some names by which this zither is called are: **kolitong**, **kollessing**, **kulibet**, **saluray**, **sigitan**, **takul**, **tangke**, **togo**, and **pagang**.

In the parallel stringed tube zithers, two bamboo strands, about 5 cm. apart, are etched out to the tube to serve as strings. At mid-point of the tube, below the strings, a small sound hole is bored and covered by a small bamboo plate clipped to the strings. When played, the strings are struck by a bamboo stick or plucked. The instrument, with slight variations, is found in northern Luzon, Mindoro, Mindanao, and Palawan where they are known by such names as **tambi**, **bamban**, **tabengbeng**, **kudling**, **tabobo**, **thambabok**, **takumbo**, and **patigunggung**.

Lutes are found only in the south, in Mindanao and Palawan. They are of the long neck variety, with two stings that run from the neck to the base of the resonating chamber. One sting plays a drone, the other a melody. Though all the lutes are fretted, the location and number of frets vary between groups. The frets of the Maranao and Maguindanao **kudyapi** are glued to the body of the resonating chamber, while the frets of the Bilaan **fugling**, the Mansaka and Mandaya **kudlong** and the Palawan **kusyapi** are located on the neck of the instrument.

One stringed bowed lutes (fiddles) of the long neck variety are found in Mindanao. They have a sounding box made from a coconut half shell covered with a leaf, or a piece of bark or animal skin. The string is make of abaca fibers, horse hair, and more recently, wire. In is called **duwagey** by the Manobo and Bilaan.

In the later period of the Spanish regime, a favorite string ensemble called **cumparsa** emerged. It was an adaptation of similar instrumental groups in Mexico (**murza** or **murga**) and Spain (**estudiantina**). During the early years of the American regime, the cumparsa was superceded by the **rondalla**.

The rondalla ensemble consists of plucked string instruments: the **bandurria**, the **laud**, the **octavina**, the six stringed **gitara** and the **bajo de unas** or bass guitar.
The bandurria is pear shaped, with a rounded back, a round sound hole and a fretted neck. It serves as the melody instrument of the ensemble. The octavina and bandurria are tuned an octave below the laud. They furnish the inner harmonies and contrapuntal elaboration to the melody. The gitara’s main function is to supply the arpeggiated or chordal underpinnings of the ensemble. The bajo de unas is tuned like the contra-bass.

Membranophones

Single and double headed drums are found throughout the Philippines. They are variously shaped--conical, cylindrical, goblet shaped, barrel shaped. Animal skins (snake, deer, or goat) is used as head/heads of the drum. They may be beaten with sticks or by the palm portion of bare hands. Drums are seldom used alone except to announce tidings over long distances. Usually they are played with other instruments, particularly gongs, to form different kinds of ensembles.

The sulibao and kimbal of the Bontok and Ibaloi are longitudinal slightly barrel shaped hollowed out logs with deer skin heads on one end. The taller drum (ca. 80 cm) is called the kimbal; the shorter (ca. 75 cm) is called the sulibaw. The drum dead is small measuring about 6 cm. in diameter. They are played with palms of two hands. The drums are combined with gongs and other instruments to form different types of ensembles.

The Ifugao libbit, ludag is a conical drum with a deer or goat skin head. It is played with a gong during harvest time under the rice granary.

The dabakan is a large goblet shaped drum used by the Maranao and Maguindanao in their kulintang ensembles.

The forgoing listing of Philippine musical instruments has been based primarily on holding of the archives at the U.P. Center for Ethnomusicology. Drawings of the indigenous instruments are taken from a Poster Set of Instruments done by artists Cecile Dioquino-Hidalgo, Anna Arce, Jose Bienvenido Ignacio, and Leah Diaz.

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