The Philippine Folk String Ensemble
(Bandurria, Octavina, Laud)

The bandurria, octavina, and laud are three instruments that are integral to the rondalla ensemble, the Philippine folk string ensemble. These three share many common features. All three have 14 strings attached to an independent tuning device called the pegs. These 14 strings are divided into six groups. The encircled numbers below indicate the groups. The numbers outside the circle indicate the fret numbers.

The Open String Notes (Tuning)
From High to Low (Group 1-6)

From Low to High (Group 6-1)
Open String Exercises using Up [✓] and [✗] Down Strokes

1.

2.

3.

4.
Lesson 1. Tuning Methods

Two most important basic steps in learning how to play any stringed musical instrument:
1) Know how to tune your respective instrument.
2) Recognize and be able to play open string notes.

Both steps are essential in developing excellent sight-reading and listening (ear training) skills.

The traditional Philippine bandurria has 14 strings, divided into six groups (see illustration below):
1. Group 1 tuned to Sol or G is the first note on the right-hand side.
2. Group 2 tuned to Re or D is the second note on the right-hand side.
3. Group 3 tuned to La or A is the third note on the right-hand side.
4. Group 4 tuned to Mi or E is the fourth note on the center.
5. Group 5 tuned to Si or B is one key below Middle C.
6. Group 6 tuned to Fa# or F# is the first note on your left-hand side.

Bandurria Open Strings (Notes and Groupings)
Lesson 2. Open String Exercises

Ex. No. 1 starting from note FA# or String Group # 6
Play and sing the note names. Apply down strokes.

Ex. No. 2 starting from note SOL or String Group # 1
Alternating strokes

Ex. No. 3 starting from note SI or String Group # 5
Alternating strokes

Ex. No. 4
Starting from note RE or String Group # 2
Alternating strokes

Ex. No. 5
Starting from note MI or String Group # 4
Alternating strokes
Ex. 2-f
Starting from note LA or String Group # 3
Alternating strokes

Ian, assisting a young octavina player playing open string études at Silliman University, Dumaguete City, Philippines
Chapter 2. Sound Production Techniques

Lesson 3.
Using the Plectrum (Pick)

Ex. 3-a Rest Stroke on Re String with Down and Up Strokes

Ex. 3-b Free Stroke with alternating Up and Down strokes

repeat alternating stroke patterns

Angled picking style for free strokes for playing the tremolo.

4 easy steps in holding the pick
1) Hold the pick firmly between your thumb and your index finger of the right hand.
2) Make sure the pick feels like an extension of your fingernail.
3) Hold the pick firmly.
4) Keep your shoulders, arm, and wrists relaxed.

Flat-angled picking style for rest strokes.
Lesson 4.
The Tremolo

The tremolo is the most effective way of sustaining the sound of the bandurria, or of any plucked instrument for that matter. It is produced by a rapid succession of alternating up-and-down strokes. Learning how to do the tremolo technique correctly require patience and stamina. You have to practice this slowly at first. There is no short-cut to learning the tremolo technique.

Ex. 4-a

Ex. 4-b Duet
O, llaw!

Ex. 4-e

(Teacher) Use guitar or octave if possible
Lesson 5.
Open String Chords

Lesson 6.
Cross-Picking on Open Strings
Lesson 7.
Open String Studies
Up and Down Strokes on Simple Note Values

- **WHOLE NOTES**

Ex. 1-a

\[ \text{Sol or G} \quad \text{Re or D} \quad \text{La or A} \quad \text{Mi or E} \quad \text{Si or B} \]

Ex. 1-b

\[ \text{Fa}\# \text{ or F}\# \quad \text{Si or B} \quad \text{Mi or E} \quad \text{La or A} \quad \text{Re or D} \]
Lesson 8.
Combining Whole, Half, Quarter Notes and Rests

Ex. 2-a

Ex. 2-b

Ex. 2-c

Ex. 2-d

Ex. 2-e
Lesson 9.
12 Open String Etudes

Michael Dada

1.

2.

3.

4.

simile
Lesson 10.
Notes on Sol String or Group 1

Ex. a  Open string
Ex. b₂  press on 2nd fret
Ex. c₄  press on 4th fret
Ex. d₅  press on 5th fret
Ex. e  Four-Note Scale on SOL Strings
Ex. f  Memory Game Tune
Ex. g  Little Waltz

Smart practice tips before you play:
1) Sing the notes.
2) Clap your hands, or tap your feet to the rhythm.
3) Keep your eyes on the score sheets.
4) Recognize the notes.
5) Remember to use alternating strokes.
Lesson 11.
Five-Note Scale on Sol String

a. Scale on SOL string

b. G Major

Lesson 12.
Etudes and Short Pieces

Tempo di Polka

Michael Dadap
Lesson 13.
Shifting Position

a. Scale on C Maj. from the 5th position

Press the Sol string on the 5th fret with finger #1. You will hear the note Do.

Press the Sol string on the 7th fret with finger #3. You will hear the note Re.

Press the Sol string on the 9th fret with finger #1. You will hear the note Mi.

Press the Sol string on the 10th fret with finger #2. You will hear the note Fa.

Press the Sol string on the 12th fret with finger #3. You will hear the note Sol.
Lesson 14.
Etudes and Pieces with Shifting Positions

Paru-parong Bukid
- G Major Scale and Arpeggio study

- Melody in G Major

- G Minor Scale and Arpeggio study
Little Prelude

Michael Dadap

Awit ni Nanay

Michael Dadap

Andante Cantabile
Lesson 13:
Scale Studies on Re String

a. Open String

b. 2nd fret, first (1st finger)

c. 3rd fret (2nd finger)

d. 4th fret (3rd finger)

e. D Scale Major on Re & Sol Strings (Introducing Fa# & Do#)

f. Memory Game

g. The Music Ladder

Arimunding-munding
Lesson 16.
Scale Studies on Re and Sol String

Make sure you press the correct fret positions for each note. Watch for accidentals signs.

Munting Balitaw

b.

Staccato

Major

Legato
Lesson 17:
Studies on La String

a. Open String

b. 2nd fret (1st finger)

c. 3rd fret (2nd finger)

d. 5th fret (4th finger)

e. Four-Note Scale

f. A Minor Scale
g. A Major Scale Study

Allegro
Adapted from Etude #10 in A Major for Guitar

Fernando Sor