

PHILIPPINE MUSIC

I. YEAR AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Philippine Music is divided into four eras or traditions, namely Ethnic, Spanish Colonial, American Colonial and Contemporary traditions. Majority of Philippine Music really revolves around cultural influence from the West, due primarily to the Spanish and American rule for over 3 centuries. Oriental (ethnic) musical backgrounds are still alive, but mainly thrive in highland and lowland barrios where there is little Western influence.

II. THE ERAS

ETHNIC TRADITION (9th to early 16th century)

Philippine ethnic musical traditions are diverse in nature, although there are many common instruments and life-cycle functions. They differ and vary mainly in form and structure, performance media, style, aesthetics, and theoretical properties (temperaments, scales, modes, and terminologies).

The diversity of ethnic musical traditions arises from several significant historical accidents. The Philippines had proto-Malays as the first inhabitants, followed by settlers from mainland and insular Southeast Asia. In essence, the separate regional settlements in the country were a result of this wave of migration.

Chinese, Malay, Indonesian and Arab merchants started dynamic trading with the people of Ma-i (now Mindoro). With the trading, the merchants not only traded goods but also religious and social ideas. Indian culture was very much evident and had a strong imprint in the culture then.

Islam was introduced in the 14th century in the island of Sulu. Various communities adopted this new religion, which very much influenced their culture and music.

Indigenous music can be instrumental or vocal. This musical tradition may mark rites of passage and life-cycle events for the early Filipinos. Also, in celebrations, instrumental playing is common. Playing the instrument solo is done for courting or entertaining one's self. Islamic music tradition, which is part of ethnic tradition, is largely based on the practices of the pre-Islamic cultures of the southern part of the Philippines.

Musical Characteristics:

Ethnic music in the Philippines was started by different groups before. The indulgent of Philippine ethnic music is premised on an admiration of native instruments which are used in the various ritual and worldly activities of these peoples and which are generally grouped into the aerophones or wind instruments; chordophones or stringed instruments; idiophones or percussion instruments struck with a hammer, or against each other, or against another object like the hand; and membranophones or percussion instruments using animal skins or membranes. Nevertheless, the ethnic music was not only made by playing instruments. Different pieces were also made by using the voices of the people. In addition of the instrumental music that was made by the groups before, vocal music was also established. Like the instruments, vocal music expresses and transmits in a concrete and vivid manner a great variety of the thoughts, beliefs, society, lifestyles, character and way of life of the native peoples. Singing is really a big component of life among the people before. People before sang in solo or in groups according to the composition of the song and the may sing with accompaniment or without; with or without the benefit of word. In singing also, there are certain patterns that the people before followed. One of which is the improvisation in singing the music. The better quality of music that the singer/s blows out, the greater ability in music they have exemplified. Another, there is generally a low and limited range of notes (more or less an octave) and given this range there is a great number of uncertain pitches. In summary, Ethnic music was focused to their rituals and lifestyles. Music was made even in a very little knowledge of the theory of music.

Musical Form:

Three main forms were exemplified by the ethnic music. The first form is the "Cantata". A cantata is a vocal composition with an instrumental accompaniment and often containing more than one movement. In singing before, the groups sing in solo or by group and some songs were sung by accompaniment. Another form that was exemplified is the "A capella". An A capella is a vocal composition without an instrumental accompaniment. The groups also did this when they sing in solo or by group without using any instruments in the background. And lastly, they ethnic music also showed the form "Sonata". Some of their compositions were only instrumental and the most instrumental compositions were used in their rituals and other worldly activities.

SPANISH COLONIAL TRADITION (1521 – 1898)

Spanish musical influence is mainly motivated to bring the Christian faith closer to the natives. The Spanish regime gave new form to Philippine music in particular. Songs, epics native drums and gongs were overshadowed by the Christian chants and the harmony of new Western instruments namely the organ, harp and the guitar.

Unfortunately for Philippine music, the arrival of the Spaniards also meant the forced eradication of ethnic music and old traditions. Performing ethnic music was highly discouraged, thus slowly disappearing, although some traditions still exist.

The formal rise of liturgical music started when missionaries taught European religious music to the new Christians. These converts proved to be good and interested in learning the plainsong, the flute, the harp, and the guitar. After fifty years since the conquest, music schools for the faith were established by the Church.

Since Christianity proved to be a very powerful force in the Colonial period, the influence of Church music extended to everyday living. As a result, as an offshoot of liturgical music, extraliturgical music was born. It evolved as time passed and eventually lost its religious characteristic.

The combination of ritual music of the indigenous religion and the music of Christianity paved way for Secular music as years passed. This type music from the Spanish Colonial tradition assimilated elements of European secular genres.

From the traditional sound of ethnic music, to *Pinoy* rock, from *bodabil* to *kundiman*, and from guttural music to *Pinoy* novelty, Filipino music has greatly evolved over the past five centuries.

Music had already been present even before Filipinos were supposedly “civilized” by the Spaniards. Filipinos, before, used different materials, such as animal skin, wood, and other organic materials to create their own musical instruments. Ethnic music in the Philippines concentrated on the different beliefs, lifestyles, societies, etc., of the native people.

When the Spanish came and invaded our country, ethnic music began to disappear because it was highly discouraged. Instead, Spanish colonialism gave rise to religious and liturgical music. However, the Spanish brought with them the formal education of music to those who were capable of learning them. Also, the Spaniards were able to expose the newly-converted Filipinos to *their own* musical instruments such as the flute, the harp, and the guitar.

Musical Characteristics:

When the Hispanics occupied the Philippines, Philippine music was greatly influenced. Music developed during this period is one of the roots for modern Filipino music. It was during this period that guitars became popular. Because of this, almost all the music forms in this period makes use of the guitar.

Musical Form:

The three main forms introduced to the Filipinos were the Harana, the Kundiman, and the Rondalla. Most of these forms were developed as a result of the fusion between tribal music styles and traditional Spanish and Mexican music. The Harana is a traditional form of courtship music in Spain in which a man woos a woman by serenading her underneath her window at night. The main instrument used for Harana is the guitar. The kundiman is a lyrical song characterized by a minor key at the beginning and shifts to a major key in the second half. The lyrics depict all sorts of stories about love from broken-heartedness to unrequited

love. Rondalla is an ensemble of instruments. Philippine rondallas consists of piccolo bandurria, bandurria, and la-ud, and the guitar-shaped octavina and mandola, guitarra, and double bass.

After the 400 year reign of the Spaniards, the American colonists brought with them a new breed of music. During this era, vaudeville (*bodabil*), cabaret (*kabaret*) and *kundiman* became the most popular forms of music.

During the short invasion of the Japanese, the Filipinization of our music became evident since the Japanese disallowed American music. However, after the occupation, the American's influence in music became apparent again.

In the past decades, Filipino music continued to evolve even more. Songs became a hybrid of other **forms** of music that were popular then, such as *kundiman*. Nevertheless, the influence of the Americans in Filipino music proved to be evident during the 1960's (during the popularity of the Beatles) and 1970's ("disco fever").

Only did in the 1980's and 1990's were OPM, or Original Pinoy Music became most apparent. Numerous artists such as Sharon Cuneta, Gary Valenciano, and even rappers like Andrew E. emerged and brought about new forms of Filipino music with their instant hits and classics.

Musical Characteristics:

When the Americans came, they brought blues, folk, R&B, and rock and roll. They also made music a part of the educational curriculum. This developed the skills of Filipinos in music and so they used this skill to imitate Western music to create local versions of Western music. Eventually, the Philippines catered its own talents like Lea Salonga at a much later date. What was popular during this time though were the juke boxes, AM radio, American dance hall, vaudeville, jazz, the Broadway musical, and vinyl records where they listened to American rock bands.

Musical Forms:

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The less "formalized and institutionalized" forms of music were heard and made popular in concert halls called kabaret, vaudeville shows showcasing comic, raucous, and even lewd sketches accompanied by jazz music, and even sometimes, traditional grass-root kundiman.

CONTEMPORARY TRADITION

In the 21st century, *Pinoy* rock is the most popular music form, along with some novelty and acoustic music. Bands such as *Parokya ni Edgar*, *Rivermaya*, and *Sandwich* have all made their names known in the music industry with their brand of music and style.

More new forms of Filipino music are emerging and hopefully will continue to flourish in the future.

Musical Characteristics:

The music established in the Philippines today is called Original Pilipino Music or OPM. This music is written in Filipino, English or Taglish. Filipinos sing the songs and Filipinos are also the ones who write the music. Original Pilipino Music are originally referred only to Philippine pop songs, especially those in the ballad form, such as songs popularized in the 1970s through the mid-1990s. Through the years, different artist bloomed out and established a different view of OPM music. Some genres of OPM were released. OPM rock is an example of the genres that came out through the years. Philippine rock musicians added folk music, and other influences, helping to lead to the 1978 breakthrough success of the artist Freddie Aguilar. Aguilar's *Anak*, his debut recording, is the most commercially successful Philippine recording, and was popular throughout Asia, and Europe, and has been translated into numerous languages by singers worldwide. 1990s saw the emergence of a superstar pop-rock group, the Eraserheads, considered by many Philippine nationals as the number one group in the Philippine recording scene. OPM rock today is the most dominant style of music inside the Philippines. Various artists and bands have extended the popularity of OPM rock. OPM rock today is sung in Filipino or English. A number of other genres are growing in popularity in the Philippine music scene, including a number of alternative groups, and tribal bands promoting cultural awareness of the Philippine Islands. These kinds of music are accompanied by various instruments to showcase the music even stronger.

Musical Form:

Various musical forms are rendered today. The music culture in the Philippines is so wide that many groups and individuals have its own style in music. Filipinos are very religious that one form of music is exemplified while praising the Lord and it is called "Mass." In this style, mass or praise songs are the main focus of the music. This form sets the fixed portions of the mass such as the Kyrie, Gloria, etc. Another form is the "Chorale." In this form, group of singers sing songs altogether. Different variations of tones are being done while singing a piece together. Same as before, the form "Cantata" is still present. Most Individuals and bands perform on stage singing songs while different instruments accompany them. Same as the "Cantata" the form "Sonata" is still present. Even if Filipinos do no recognize this form in some music, the form is present when artist tend not to put voices in some songs. Lastly, for special events, the form "Oratorio" is exhibited in the country but it is very seldom. Different groups form together to perform this musical form. An orchestra, a chorale and a soloist are joined together to perform this kind of music. The Philippines has several musical forms today and is continuing to flourish in the future.

Musical Composers of Filipino Music

Nicanor Abelardo

Nicanor Sta. Ana Abelardo (February 7, 1893 – March 21, 1934), was a Filipino composer who composed over a hundred of Kundiman songs, especially before the Second World War.

Abelardo was born in San Miguel de Mayumo, Bulacan. His mother belonged to a family of artists in Guagua, the Hensons. He was introduced to music when he was five years old, when his father taught him the solfeggio and the banduria. At the age of 8, he was able to compose his first work, a waltz entitled "Ang Unang Buko," which was dedicated to his grandmother. At the age of 13, he was already playing at saloons and cabarets in Manila. At age 15, he was already teaching in barrio schools in San Ildefonso and San Miguel Bulacan. All of these happened even before young Abelardo finally took up courses under Guy F. Harrison and Robert Schofield at the UP Conservatory of Music in 1916. By 1924, following a teacher's certificate in science and composition received in 1921, he was appointed head of the composition department at the Conservatory. Years later, he ran a boarding school for young musicians, and among his students were National Artist Antonino Buenaventura, Alfredo Lozano and Lucino Sacramento. In the field of composition he is known for his redefinition of the kundiman, bringing the genre to art-song status. Among his works were "Nasaan Ka Irog," "Magbalik Ka Hirang," and "Himutok." He died in 1934 at the age of 41, leaving a prolific collection of more than 140 works.^[1]

As a composition major at the University of the Philippines, he also composed the melody for the university's official anthem, *U.P. Naming Mahal*.

The building housing the College of Music in UP Diliman (Abelardo Hall) is named in his honor.^[2]

Antonino Buenaventura

Antonino was a composer, conductor and teacher who was born in Baliuag, Bulacan, 4 May 1904. At 19, he entered the University of the Philippines Conservatory of Music and earned a teacher's diploma, major in science and composition in 1932. Among his mentors at the UP were Nicanor Abelardo, Francisco Santiago and Jenő von Takács. When Abelardo died in 1934, Buenaventura took over his classes.

During his student days, Buenaventura was president of the Music Senior Organization and led the UP ROTC Band. He organized the first student string quartet and student symphony orchestra, which became the nucleus of the UP Junior Symphony Orchestra. As a member of the Presidents' Advisory Committee on Folk Songs and Dances created by the UP President Jorge Bocobo in 1935, he scoured the country with Francisca Reyes and Ramon Tolentino to record folk dances and music.

On several occasions, he represented the Philippines in international conferences as head or representative of music organizations. He was also overall coordinator of the Second Southeast Asian Bandmasters Association held in Manila in 1977 and member of the

Philippine delegation to the 40th anniversary of the All-Nippon Bandmaster Association in Tokyo 1978.

Writing in the neoclassic and neoromantic vein, Buenaventura uses ethnic and folk materials in his compositions. Among his works based on Philippine folk melodies are: Minuet, 1937, for chamber orchestra; Mindanao Sketches, 1947, a tone poem; Divertimento for Piano and Orchestra, 1959; Variations and Fugue, 1972, for full orchestra; and Greetings, 1978, a fantasy for band based on the kumintang. One of his most popular compositions is "Pandango sa Ilaw" (fandango of Lights), 1936, which was originally meant to accompany a dance choreographed by Francisca Reyes-Tolentino, and was transformed into a song by lyricist Levi Celerio who entitled it "Pandanguhan". Other notable works are Echoes from the Philippines, performed by the PC Band under Loving at the Golden Gate Exposition in California, USA in 1939; By the Hillside, 1947, his most widely performed symphonic work; and "Awit sa Tagumpay ng Bayan" (Song for Nation's Triumph), 1986, a song commemorating the February 1986 uprising in the Philippines.

He also wrote a textbook entitled Sing and Be Happy, 1966, for Grades V and VI music classes in public schools. He has composed a number of school hymns and university marches.

Lucrecia Kasilag

Lucrecia R. Kasilag, as educator, composer, performing artist, administrator and cultural entrepreneur of national and international caliber, has involved herself wholly in sharpening the Filipino audience's appreciation of music. Kasilag's pioneering task to discover the Filipino roots through ethnic music and fusing it with Western influences has led many Filipino composers to experiment with such an approach. She dared to incorporate indigenous Filipino instruments in orchestral productions, such as the prize-winning "Tocatta for Percussions and Winds, Divertissement and Concertante," and the scores of the Filiasiana, Misang Pilipino and De Profundis. "Tita King", as she is fondly called, worked closely as music director with colleagues Lucrecia Reyes-Urtula, Isabel Santos, Jose Lardizabal and Dr. Leticia P. de Guzman and made Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company one of the premier artistic and cultural groups in the country.

Named as a National Artist in Music in 1989, Kasilag's first musical influence was her mother. At an early age, Kasilag played the banduria and the guitar. She finished her bachelor of music degree at the Philippine Women's University, and then studied at the Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester in New York, where she obtained her master of music degree, major in theory and minor in composition in 1950.

Kasilag began composing during WW II. She has written over 250 compositions: folk song arrangements, art songs, solo instrumental pieces, and chamber and orchestral works. Her orchestral music also include Love Songs, Legend of the Sarimanok, Ang Pamana, Philippine Scenes, Dilarawan, Her Son, Jose and Sisa and chamber music like Awit ng mga Awit Psalms, Fantaisie on a 4-Note Theme, and East Meets Jazz Ethnika.