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Descriptive Analysis on the Cultural Significance of Ifugao Indigenous Music

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Abstract:

Culture is interactive. The culture develops and changes through time, place, and circumstances. Descriptive content Analysis of the Cultural Significance of the Ifugao Indigenous Music is a descriptive examination of the cultural value of Ifugao indigenous music focusing its essential contribution to the preservation of customs, beliefs and community identity. Based on field work with culture bearer, ethnographic data, the study delves on how music serves as a means of cultural expression of Ifugao society. Often performed during rice ceremonies, harvest celebrations, and rites of passage, Ifugao music reveals that it reflects spiritual, agricultural, and social values firmly ingrained in the perspective of the community. Not only are instruments like the Gangsa/tobob (flat gong), Libbit, Bangibang, Bunkaka, and vocal traditions creative expressions but also archives of ancestral knowledge and oral history telling simple cultural practices in Ifugao society. This research delves on how Ifugao people reflects their belief in the unseen deities, nurturance of societal connections and cosmological concepts in their indigenous musical practices. It also covers the threats of modern transformation and cultural erosion which calls for inclusive education and efforts at cultural preservation. This study also advocates on the preservation of Ifugao music as a living legacy vital to the intangible cultural heritage of the people of Ifugao and the Philippines as whole adding to the understanding of indigenous cultural inheritance of the land.

Keywords: Culture, Indigenous, Musical instruments, Songs, Ifugao, Cordillera

Abstrak

Budaya bersifat interaktif, berkembang dan berubah melalui waktu, tempat, dan keadaan. Analisis Konten Deskriptif tentang Signifikansi Budaya Musik Adat Ifugao merupakan kajian deskriptif yang mengeksplorasi nilai budaya musik pribumi Ifugao dengan fokus pada kontribusi esensialnya terhadap pelestarian adat istiadat, kepercayaan, dan identitas komunitas. Berdasarkan penelitian lapangan bersama para pewaris budaya dan data etnografi, studi ini menyelidiki bagaimana musik berfungsi sebagai sarana ekspresi budaya masyarakat Ifugao. Musik Ifugao yang sering ditampilkan dalam upacara padi, perayaan panen, dan ritus peralihan hidup mencerminkan nilai-nilai spiritual, pertanian, dan sosial yang tertanam kuat dalam perspektif komunitas. Instrumen seperti Gangsa/tobob (gong datar), Libbit, Bangibang, Bunkaka, dan tradisi vokal bukan hanya merupakan ekspresi kreatif, tetapi juga arsip pengetahuan leluhur dan sejarah lisan yang menceritakan praktik budaya sederhana dalam masyarakat Ifugao. Penelitian ini menggali bagaimana masyarakat Ifugao merefleksikan kepercayaan mereka terhadap dewa-dewa yang tak terlihat, pemeliharaan hubungan sosial, dan konsep kosmologis melalui praktik musik pribumi mereka. Studi ini juga mengulas ancaman transformasi modern dan erosi budaya yang menuntut pendidikan inklusif dan upaya pelestarian budaya yang komprehensif. Penelitian ini mengadvokasi pentingnya pelestarian musik Ifugao sebagai warisan hidup yang vital bagi khazanah budaya takbenda masyarakat Ifugao dan Filipina secara keseluruhan, memberikan kontribusi pada pemahaman tentang warisan budaya pribumi tanah air. Dengan demikian, musik Ifugao tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai identitas budaya, tetapi juga sebagai jembatan penghubung antara generasi masa lalu, kini, dan masa depan.

Kata Kunci: Budaya, Masyarakat Asli, Alat Musik, lagu-lagu, ifuao, Cordillera

1. Introduction

“In societies without a written language, the history of a people and the stories of their ancestors must be committed to memory. In some African countries and Papua New Guinea, musicians often specialized in these mnemonic feats. Because their languages have an inherent musical quality, it is a small step to make words into songs” (Steven Felds 1982/1992, Paul Wolfram 2011 & Ruth Stone 2008).

Asian Music is not far among those cited. Middle East Asia displays a strong manifestation of northern Africa. The intricacies and embellishments characterized by the “grace notes” are vocally demanding for non-Muslims to interpret. Thorman (2023) asserts, “traditional Arabic music is almost wholly melodic, and melodies are often melismatic and highly ornamented...” Southeast Asian countries have similar music and sounds. The languages, rhythmic patterns, musical forms, and some musical instruments have similarities. As Susilo (1972, 1) cited, “...there is a similarity—but not a duplication—among the many music in Southeast Asia”. This affirms the connections within and among these countries.

In the northern part of the Philippines, Ifugao province is nestled in the highland Cordillera Administrative Region and whose music strongly reflects their culture. Historically, the Ifugaos were also called Ipugo (which means, “from the mountain”) surrounded by the provinces of Mt. Province, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino Province, and Benguet. Ifugao embraces the similarly cultural municipalities of Banaue, Hungduan, Kiangan, Lagawe—the capital (also Lagaue), Lamut, Mayoyao, Potia, Hingyon, and Tinoc Municipalities.

Ifugao music can be identified as instrumental or vocal mostly, ritual in nature. The musical instruments remain indigenous despite the attempts of the intruders to alter it by introducing Western cultures. Gangsa (Also called Gangha) is the most popular musical instrument that accompanies dance performances. Musical instruments are—usually—not intended to accompany vocal music. Notwithstanding that Gangsa is popular in Ifugao, it is also widely used all over the region of Cordillera

During the Ifugao feast, rhythmic music is produced through the use of gangsa (flat or brass gongs) marks the start of the feast. Songs such as “Dummake”, “Guinamay” or Indoge’d Nalodan” are songs related to the Ifugao feast that can also be sung. Chanting, however, by the “mombaki” or “mumbaki” is the most sacred form of music during the feast. Paki or Ifugao myth can be directly connected with some “Hudhud” pieces and songs about “Bugan” and “Aliguyun”. These describe the characteristics and origin of Ifugaos. Ifugao myths are also articulated in the chanting of a

mumbaki. These chantings have no notation and no written scores. In the Hudhud, some stories are not realistic but are related to their beliefs. According to Lambrecht, (1957) it is not due to a belief that the numerous incidents recounted by their soloist and corroborated by the chanters occurred in the distant past, as none among them acknowledges this, but rather because they are unable to comprehend how their ancestors could have created them.

Liwliwa is closely associated with Ifugao love songs or courtship songs like “Balluha’d Bayyauhen”, “Tudde” and “Tugun”. Other rituals and gatherings have no music specification except for the beating of “lib-bit” (drums) and gangsa during such occasions. According to Geertz (1983), “Culture is the total way of life of a people. It is a set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and other men. It is an identity of a certain group of people”. Hoffer (2007) also cited that it is the aggregate of lifestyles developed by a community of individuals and passed down over generations.

Music reflects cultural uniqueness. As mentioned by Schopenhauer: “Just for this reason, the effect of music is so much more mighty and vivid than the effect of the other arts: they only talk about the shadow, but music about the essence. A better understanding of music is also a better understanding of a culture.” Music of any kind, personal preference, or rooted in one’s culture, reflects the society’s identity.

The objectives of this research are:

- a. Identify the cultural significance of musical instruments based on its uses and functions;
- b. Determine the cultural implications of the selected indigenous songs of the Ifugaos through textual analysis of the existing lyrics and;
- c. Draw cultural values from the uses and functions of both, Ifugao indigenous songs and musical instruments.

2. Methods

This study utilized descriptive content analysis as a primary research design since it sought to bring out the culture of the people from the songs they are singing. As a research tool, descriptive content analysis helped the researcher discuss their culture through the texts of their songs and images of the musical instruments. The purpose of such analysis in this study was to understand the culture of the people as contained in the texts of the songs and the images and uses of the instruments. Descriptive content analysis was supported with interviews with people and readings from printed materials. The positivistic paradigm was also employed in the study in order for the researcher to come up with an objective analysis of Ifugao music. The researcher took the stance of a stranger looking into the culture of a group.

3. Results

The Selected Indigenous Songs of Ifugao

Ifugao music has an indigenous origin because of the authenticity of the people's culture. According to Madarang (1991), "the topographical descriptions and archaic terms used in the lyrics of their songs are indicative of the antiquity of their (Ifugao) music". This is so because the Spaniards, Americans, and Japanese were not able to touch the culture of the Ifugaos. Indigenous songs can also be classified as Aboriginal songs. This is a type of music that was created in the place or region long before the arrival of the Spaniards in the country.

Indigenous or folksongs are worth keeping because they are a collection of society's daily routines expressed only thus, can be saved in one's heart, and cannot be stolen. Abiog (1975) added that folksongs are truly one of our most cherished cultural possessions, summing up our daily experiences as a people in a very simple, understandable style.

Ed-eddoy is one of the most popular Ifugao folksongs. It originated in the municipality of Hingyon. The song describes the typical life of the people of Hingyon – that of simplicity and contentment. Accordingly, the possession of palay, pig, and cock is enough for them. As the (excerpt) lines below suggest:


Page da an bulkita'-a'-an : Their Palay in Bulkitanditan
Babuy da'n nabakgita'-a'-an : Their pig with fangs
Manuk da'n napaghinga'-a'-an : Their speckled cock

Figure 1. The Notation of Hingyon's Folksong "Ed-dedoy"

Ed-dedoy

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Moderato



Ed ed do o oy hi bu gan 'nak da mi ta a

an do la da'd na mul di ta a an ba le da'n na la gi ta a an pa ge da'y na la gi

ta a an ba buy da'n na bak gi ta a an ma nuk da'n na pag hi nga a an ed ed-

do o oy

The song speaks of the simplicity of the people. It shows that they are not attached to material things. The lines also describe what the typical Ifugao owns: palay, pig, and chicken, which they commonly raise for their daily needs. Palay has been the most important crop for the Ifugao. Rice, being a significant crop among Ifugaos, cultural practice is evident. (<http://ifugao.wordpress.com/>). Raising animals is also very important for them. Among these animals are pigs and chickens, which, aside from consumption, are used as offerings for ritual ceremonies.

Pan Anup (Ifugao Song)



Figure 2. The Notation of Pan Apup, an Ifugao Song

Pan-anup is a song that speaks of the hunting life of the people in Ifugao. It originated in Tinoc. Hunting is an activity common among Ifugao males, as attested by Codamon (2009), who said that the municipalities of Aguinaldo and Mayoyao used to be the hunting ground of the people because fish, fowl, and other wild animals were in abundance and free for the taking. Hunting is a man's work, and preparing food for the man is the task of the woman, as stated in the following lines:

Bangubangun ka ina : Wake, wake up mother
Ka pan-ugan ni aba : Go, cook the yam
Sikdupen kud-anupan : I will bring to the hunting ground
'nak sid-an nikumbilan : For viand, I'll catch a deer
Os piyanyus, Os mangongos: os Piyanyus, Os mangongos

'Nak sid-an nikumbilan" (For viand, I'll catch a deer) implies that hunting is primarily for subsistence, especially in the olden times. However, nowadays, the hunting of deer, wild buffalo, pigs, and snakes supplements the income. These animals are being hunted not only for their food value but also for the profit generated from their skins, bones, skulls, and horns. In some shops in Lagawe and Banaue, one finds for sale jewelry made from animal skins and bones.

Dogdogwe is a folksong from Kiangnan. The good harvest described in the song is evidence of their industry and patience. To get the dogwe

fruit, one must have to stretch his arms to reach it and patiently hold the branch down to get it. As described by Lambrecht (1958), dogwe is a tree bearing fruits that look like very small apples. The fruit contains many seeds; flesh and seeds are edible; they are an Ifugao delicacy, although their taste is somewhat sour even when they are ripe. The picking of the fruit takes time since the ripened ones must be chosen among the unripe.

Unity, patience, and cooperation are shown when the Ifugaos help one another during planting and harvesting seasons. They also help each other in building their houses. They do not normally get paid for their labor. It is sufficient that the host of the activity feeds them well.


<i>Dogdogwe'n nattuduk</i>	: Dogwe fruit stringed together
<i>Dogdogwe'n naballuke</i>	: Dogwe clustered together
<i>An punhinyukkan da</i>	: bending its branches to pick
<i>Punhiningawwayan da</i>	: stretching their arms to reach

Ahibakle is another occupational song that originated in Kiangnan. It features feasting after harvesting rice. The song portrays the different uses of rice after harvest. They pound the rice and make rice cakes and rice wine that are served to people. Comradeship is implied in the song. Aside from the famous beetle nut shared among the group, the song also shows that Ifugaos can start a friendship through a cup of rice wine.

<i>Ang-angyon yu di page</i>	: Behold the Palay
<i>Page mi'n makaphod</i>	: Palay of ours so good
<i>Inala mi hi alang</i>	: We got from the granary
<i>Alang mi'd Tublingan</i>	: Granary of ours in Tublingan
<i>Tulu kamin mumbayu</i>	: Three of us pound
<i>Hi oha an luhong</i>	: In one mortar
<i>Imbayu mi muntitinlu kami</i>	: Three of us are pounding
<i>Inyapyap mi hi kagalagala</i>	: we winnowed very quickly
<i>Te ad uwani mumbakle kami</i>	: for we are making rice cake,
<i>Tulu kami'n humagub</i>	: three of us fetch water
<i>Hi oha'n alowog</i>	: Using one bamboo tube
<i>Intaya mi ya dakamin amin</i>	: Filled it with water, all of us
<i>Impah-on mi ya akamin amin</i>	: we shouldered all of us
<i>Te ad uwani mumbakli kami</i>	: for we are making rice cake,
<i>Pinalut mi bibakle</i>	: we made rice dough,
<i>Hi oha'n ligau</i>	: In one winnow
<i>Impekpek mi ya binobodan</i>	: We wrapped and tied them
<i>Ihaang mi maan-anla kami</i>	: We cooked, and we are happy
<i>Te ad uwani mumbakle kami</i>	: For we are making rice cake,
<i>Ang-angon yu di baya</i>	: you see the rice wine
<i>Baya mi'n malin-ong</i>	: Our clear wine
<i>Itaug mi ke dakayun am-in</i>	: we serve to all of you
<i>Tamtaman yu't mun-ap-apnga taku</i>	: you taste and we be merry
<i>Te ad uwani mumbakle taku</i>	: For we are making rice cake

Figure 3. The Notation of Kiang's Song, Ahibakle

Ahibakle (Excerpt)
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Ang-ang-on yu di pa-ge pa-ge min ma-kap-hod I-na-la mi ni a-lang a-
 5 ang mid Tu-bi-ngan te na-dat-ngan di bak-le bak-le min bim-hob-le ta-lu ka-rin mun-
 15 ba-yu hi o-ha an lu-hung im-ba-yu mi mun-ti-tin-lu ka-mi in-yap-yap mi hi ka-ga-la-ga-la te
 22 ad u-wa-ni mun-bak-le ka-mi

The song also talks about the process of making rice cake-from gathering the palay in the granary and then pounding and winnowing it. Then they make dough which they wrap and tie and then cook. Finally, it is served with rice wine.

Cultural Practices Reflected in the Music of Ifugao

As mentioned by Abiog (1979) "an expressive folk art, folksongs reflect the nation's sentiments and creative spirit and are an essential part of the cultural heritage of our people". Music and culture are two inseparable concepts in the aesthetic world. Music is the reflection of culture, and therefore, music is always affected by whatever changes occur in culture. The belief of the people in the unknown, despite the spread of Christianity, is summarized in the song Hi Banig.

<i>Hi banig, Hmm!</i>	: Oh, a ghost, hmm
<i>Namaypayyo'd Habiatan, Hmm</i>	: Built terraces at Habiatan, hmm
<i>Kaat na'y tulu'n banong, hmm</i>	: Only three paddies, hmm
<i>Mu maid itannom na, hmm</i>	: But had nothing to plant, hmm
<i>Puttingona' komong na, hmm</i>	: Cut off his finger, hmm
<i>Hidiye'y itanno na, hmm</i>	: That's what he planted, hmm
<i>Bummunga ya lablabong</i>	: It bore fruit of the lablabong

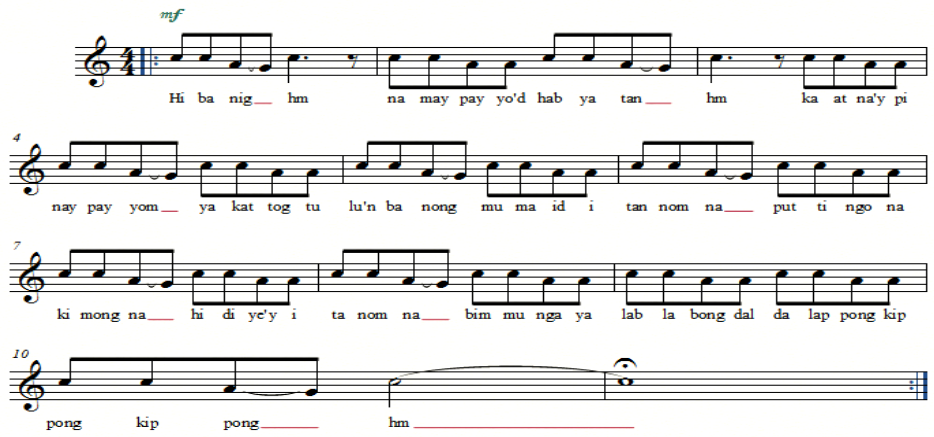
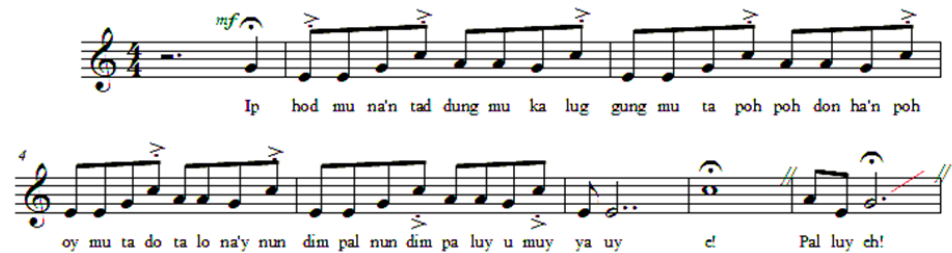
<p>Figure 4. The Notation of The Song Hi Banig (Excerpt)</p>	<p><i>Daldalappon, kippong-kippong: Low wooden stool, kippong, kippong, hmm</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hi Banig (Excerpt) Music 302: Theoretical Construct in Music I</p>  <p>In the Hi Banig, the spirit or the ghost is mentioned. The spirits of their ancestors are believed to be roaming around, guarding them, especially their rice fields. In any of the Ifugaos religious practices, the spirits were pleased because the people believed they could bring them good or bad luck. Constantino (2011, 156) asserts that the utilization of the people's remarkable imaginations in the domain of the supernatural has culminated in a complex religion, featuring several deities and elaborate personal and social ceremonies that commemorate various events. Hence, even with the spread of Christianity in Ifugao, old traditions are still being practiced.</p> <p>Courtship, Marriage, and Ifugao Music</p> <p>Traditionally, if an Ifugao male would like to marry, he would visit the women's agaman. He is expected to bring ingredients for "Moma" or betel nuts so that women around will join him. The male is expected to court the lady who was selected by both parents to be his future wife. This parental agreement is an age-old tradition where young people generally abide by the choice made for them by their parents (Dumia,1979). However, nowadays the young people have their own freedom to choose whom they are going to marry.</p> <p>Matchmaking is also a traditional practice among Ifugaos in earlier times and is seldom practiced nowadays. This is based on their bethrotal practices. The basis of matchmaking is the economic and social status of the person in the community. Males are encouraged by their parents to marry even if they are still young because it is their honor to have grandchildren before their death.</p> <p>Pearranged marriages are known during the earlier times in Ifugao. While parents may betroth their children at an early age, at times children grow up to find that they did not love the person matched with them, in which case other arrangements may be made (Dumia, 1979). Tugun, on the other hand, is a song that describes a man who is ready to marry. He was</p>

Figure 5. The Notation of the Song Tugun

asked to dress well to get ready for his wedding. Wedding in Ifugao needs a lot of preparation. Being engaged is an even bigger responsibility for a man. He needs to serve the girl and do the heavy tasks in the household.

Tugun

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<i>Ip hod mu na'n taddung mu</i>	: Properly wear your hat
<i>Kalugong mu</i>	: your hat
<i>Ta pohpohdon ha'n poh-oy mu</i>	: So you will look good
<i>Ta dotalona' nundimpal</i>	: That he level your wide
<i>Nundimpaluy</i>	: Spacious house yard
<i>Umuyya-uy E-e palluy eh</i>	: For your wedding feast, eh

<i>Ip hod mu na'n ampuyyo mu</i>	: Properly don your tapis
<i>Ta pohpohdon na'n poh-oy mu</i>	: So you will look good
<i>Ta dotalona'y nundimpal</i>	: That he level your wide
<i>Nundimpaluy</i>	: spacious house yard
<i>Umuyya-uy E-e palluy eh</i>	: For your wedding feast, eh

In Tugun, wearing a good and attractive outfit is desirable for the couple before their wedding feast.

Burial Practices and Ifugao Music

The Ifugaos believe that the soul exists after death. They also believed that when a loved one dies; he must be given elaborate funeral rites regardless of the family's social and economic status. Those with modest means assume the huge financial burden as a matter of pride (Verora, 1982).

Adults who die a natural death have more days of vigil. Poor families usually last five days while the rich last six to nine days. There are animal offerings and all the people in the village are invited to eat and partake in the sharing of meat. Animals butchered during the burial are native pigs and chickens for the poor families. Carabao is also butchered when the family of the person who died is rich. Animals butchered during the burial show the status of the family. Hudhud is being performed during burial (Dumia, 1979). The life of Ifugaos as farmers is partly described in the song Hi Banig.

	<p>Hi Banig</p> <p>Hi banig, Hmm! : Oh, a ghost, hmm</p> <p>Namaypayyo'd Habiatan, Hmm : Built terraces at Habiatan, hmm</p> <p>Kaat na'y tulu'n banong, hmm : Only three paddies, hmm</p> <p>Mu maid itannom na,hmm : But had nothing to plant, hmm</p> <p>Puttingona' komong na, hmm : Cut off his finger, hmm</p> <p>Hidiye'y itanno na, hmm : That's what he planted, hmm</p> <p>Bummunga ya lablabong : It bore fruit of the lablabong</p> <p>Daldalapon, kippong-kippong : Low wooden stool, kippong, kippong, hmm</p> <p>The song describes the difficulty in preparing the terrain for planting during the rainy season. The Ifugaos have to plant the rice sprouts bit by bit using their fingers to dig a hole in the mud.</p> <p>The economy of Ifugao is partly dependent on handicrafts specifically on woodcarving. Ifugaos are known as carvers of Cordillera and this gives them an income that also helps their economy to sustain. According to Malanes (2009) as mentioned by Constantino (2011, 184) "woodcraft industry is sustaining both the Ifugao people's innate talent in recreating something out of wood and their entrepreneurial or business skills". The researcher also personally witnessed the woodcraft industry during his visit to several places in Ifugao.</p> <p>In Mungayang, Kiangan, (where my friend comes from) it is observed that some economic activities are done by the people such as catching fish in the river and raising domesticated pigs and chickens. The economic activities center around piggery, poultry raising, and farming as described in their songs. Other activities such as hunting and woodcarving add to the economic income of the people. The songs of the Ifugaos are reflections of what they do to survive. Their songs describe the kind of people they are in the past and their strategies in overcoming life's adversaries.</p> <p>4.Musical Instruments of Ifugao</p> <p>There are only several musical instruments were originated in Ifugao. Some of these are the "Bangibang", "Bikkung" or "Fi-ung", "Palipal" and Lib-bit. Additional musical instruments, such the gangsa, tungali, nose flute, bunkaka, and bamboo buzzer, are derived from the adjacent provinces of Kalinga and Mt. Province. Each Ifugao musical instrument has a certain purpose based on the occasion. Madarang (1991) posits that playing musical instruments serves alone as a means of expression, rather than as an accompaniment to vocal expressions. Playing musical instruments is an unequivocal expression of Ifugao culture.</p>
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Bangibang

Bangibang, referred to as "Pattong," is the preeminent musical instrument among the Ifugaos. It is performed as an ensemble. It is constructed from aged, seasoned hardwood. It has an average width of 4 inches at its broadest point in the center and is around 2 to 3 inches thick. Holes are drilled into the central section where the handle is affixed. It is struck at the ends (either left or right) with a wooden implement. It is categorized as an idiophone; a solid percussion instrument.

Madarang (1991) asserts that bangibang is predominantly utilized during the rite for the interment of a homicide victim or Him-ung. In this rite, the bangibang is exclusively performed by male warriors, as they are typically the individuals capable of enacting vengeance against adversaries. It is utilized as a component of the him-ung ceremony. The bangibang instrument is only utilized for ritualistic purposes, particularly to produce a distinctive sound that evokes a sense of vengeance for the deceased individual. The beating of the bangibang produces a sound that is paired with a dance illustrating their method of attacking and killing the opponent with spears.

The wake of a murdered person is different. It lasts only for three days and without any offerings. Only the close relatives of the deceased keep the vigil.

Vengeance has another ceremony. There will be a processional march from the place of origin to the house of the murdered person where the burial rite will be performed. Rhythm is produced by Bangibang with the accompaniment of dances that describe how the vengeance will be done. According to Dumia (1979), "the war dance is performed by the relatives and friends of the deceased". All participants are dressed in the Ifugao costume- the G-string, the headdress, the decorative multi-purpose bag (butong) the knapsack, and the wooden clappers (pattung).

During an interview to Manuel Dulawan in 2008, "the burial practices of Ifugao are expressed in several ways depending on the social status of the deceased and the cause of death. The animals to be butchered during wakes and vigils are determined by their social status. Music in the form of Hudhud is also chanted during these days. Music played through the use of Bangibang is done in cases of murdered persons".

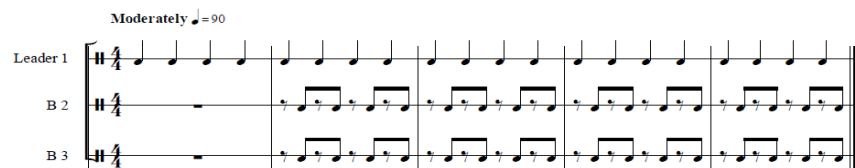
Bangibang is also utilized in the ritual called, "Dog-al" to ward off as what they believed evil spirits in a form of pests in the fields. The sound produced is used to scare or create fear among the rats infesting the rice fields.

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Figure 7. Bangibang
Rhythmic pattern



Figure 6. Bangibang, a utility for
Dog-al ritual



Gangsa/Gangha

Madarang (1991) states that the Gangsa, or Gangha, in Ifugao is a flat percussion gong. Gangha can be composed of bronze (Giniling) or brass (Paliha). *Tobob*, the largest within the gangha group, characterized by a low-pitched gong. It is executed using a clenched fist that is distinctive among the Ifugaos.

Figure 8. Gangha



Figure 8. Gangha is used to accompany different Ifugao dances like the

Dinuyya of Kiangnan, Lagawe, Hingyon, Banaue and Hungduan, Hinggatut among the Ayangans of Mayoyao and Aguinaldo, Pagaddut of Kiangnan and the Tayao of Tinoc.

Bikkung

Figure 9. Bikkung, a Jew Harp of Ifugao



Madarang (1991) described *Bikkung*, or Jew's harp, as constructed from a slender strip of bamboo measuring half a centimeter. It measures around 4 inches in length and about half an inch in breadth. It is flexible. To play the Bik-kung, it must be positioned between the player's lips and struck with either the right or left finger (Thumb) to generate a resonant sound. It is classified as an idiophone due to the necessity of being struck with a finger to generate sound (Madarang, 1991). *Bikkung* serves as a source of entertainment or can be performed at night as a method of courtship.

Lib-bit

Figure 10. Lib-bit



Lib-bit is a wooden percussion instrument. It is a membranophone and likely the most prevalent drum instrument among the Ifugao people. It is constructed from hollow wood encased with animal hide, specifically cowhide. *Lib-bit* is available in many sizes and designs (Madarang, 1991). The wood is treated with grease to safeguard against termites. The body features etched motifs. It can be played with the palms or a pair of sticks. The diminutive *lib-bit* possesses a string. It can be slung over the shoulder like a handbag while

engaging in activities that require the use of hands.

Bamboo Clapper/*Palipal*

As Dulawan described *Palipal*, he said that “it is a ritual clapper, made from the matured hallow bamboo tube. It is around 25 inches long and around 1-1.5 inches in diameter. It has an open 6-7 inches elongated hole on the middle part in both sides. The other half is separated by a fissure to allow the bamboo to flex and produce a clap-like sound”. This is also attested by the Ifugao source: “The *palipal* is exclusively used during the harvest ritual. However, instead of the gongs, the clapper is also used in the burial of an ordinary Ifugao”.



Figure 11. *Palipal*, a ritual clapper of Ifugao

Musical instruments play an important role in identifying a certain group of indigenous people in the country. This attests to what Rivadelo (1994) said that “instruments served as the people’s memorable summary of their culture”. Ifugao musical instruments play a very important role in their ritual ceremonies. They are not used to accompany a song to express their feelings. An example is the *bikkung* which is played during courtship and the *bangibang* percussion’s sounds invite a feeling of revenge.

The music of the mountain people or *ipugo* is truly inspiring and defines the beauty of their identity and existence. Unlike other music, Ifugao is authentic and archaic. It is truly a pride of the Filipino people to have authentic Filipino music emanating from the mountains of the cordilleras like Ifugao. One can also witness performances of this music during the flower festival in Baguio city where all Cordilleran provinces together with their cultural practices were being represented during the street parade and festivals. The exceptional event one could witness these musical and cultural practices is during the *Gotad ad Ifugao*, a gathering and festival of the many different cultural groups around the province. The live performances of different musical instruments and oral traditions were featured to remind the youth of their heritage.

The Philippine NCCA (National Commission for Culture and the Arts) also contributed a significant part to the sustainability of the different cultural practices of Ifugao by putting up a School of Living Tradition (SLT) in Kiangan, Ifugao. The institution intends to teach the young and old alike their cultural practices such as music, indigenous

instruments, cooking food, oral traditions, and weaving among others. Despite the era of modernization and digitalization, the cultural significance of Ifugao music is well-preserved and has been transmitted in many different ways through school textbooks, festivals, small and many important gatherings, performances, and research. All of these, are embodied in their actual lifeways.

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