

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE FOLK MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MEGHALAYA

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SUMMARY. Meghalaya is a richly inhabited Indian state. Drums, flutes of bamboo and hand-held small cymbals are a common ensemble. The advent of Christianity in the middle of the 20th century marked the start of a decline in tribal popular music. Over time, Meghalaya's music scene has evolved, attracting many talented artists and bands from both traditional and not-so traditional genres. Any of the most recent Meghalaya musicians and bands is: The Plague Throat, Kerios Wahlang, Cryptographik Street Poets, etc., Soulmate, Lou Majaw, and Snow White. Meghalaya's music is characterised by traditional instruments and folk songs. The Musical Instruments of Meghalaya are made from local materials. Meghalayan people honour powerful natural forces and aim to pacify animistic spirits and local gods. The instruments are made of bamboo, flesh, wood, and animal horn. Any one of these musical instruments is considered to have the ability to offer material benefits. The Meghalaya musical instrument is an essential part of traditional folk music in the region. In this article, we offer an overview of the folk musical instruments of Meghalaya.

Keywords: Idiophone, Aerophone, Chordophone, Membranophone, Trumpet.

1. Introduction

There is worldly music everywhere in this wonderful country (Aman 2007). Equally, because any art needs a powerful medium to communicate its apparatus and individuality, a musical instrument is a medium to communicate the 'Nada' artistic, which has a worldwide significance (Balaji 2009). In Indian music, instrumental music plays a major part. The musical instrumental is also called the Vadhya Sangeet. It is one of the three elements of the music (vocal, instrumental music and dance) known as the

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'Sangeet' of Indian Music. From the beginning of instrumental music and instrumentalist or instrumental players (artist), the two components have been incredibly significant. The music art is difficult to convey in the absence of one of the above elements. Music is regarded as a direct channel to express emotions from ancient times. Vocals consist of powerful words of any language and musical notes, also called 'Swaras.' While Swaras is the same with instrumental music, in Boles there is also a language consisting of words. Musical instruments play music in the boles on the musical notes. In compositions of pricked instruments, for example, boles are played such as: Da, Dir, Dara etc. As previously mentioned, the Classical Indian Music is mostly individualistic (Chattarjee 2001). Our instruments are often designed for solo reproduction as well. Indian musicians views music as a gateway to the godship and thus participates in swarasadhana (tone culture) throughout singing or playing. He is so absorbed by his activity that his character is completely apparent from his setting and fuses into 'Nadabrahma.' The solo character of our musical instrument is solely unique. There are since no sets or prewritten compositions in Indian Classical Music. Of the instrumentalist himself is the composer and is free of the limits of an exposition of a raga to handle the medium of his choosing. Eminent musicians have recently attempted, in the manner of western orchestral compositions, to use Indian instruments in a group to create an orchestral effect but have not been extraordinarily successful (Chakraborty 2017). Most instruments in a group sound small and ineffectual, because only the arrangement and arrangements are to be played in solo and thus not able to have the musical influence they like. Musical instruments have played an important role in the history and growth of Indian Classical Music. A large overview of Indian Instrumental Music history and development is available. To comprehend this large representation, an effort was made to separate it frequently based on cycles of time, middle and present like old, mediaeval, and modern times.

Khasi (of Mone-Khmer descent), Garos (of Tibetan and Burmand origin), and Jaintias, considered to come from Southeast Asia, are each one of the major ethnic groups of Meghalaya and their own distinctive practises and cultural traditions. The popular characteristic in all three cultures is their matrilineal scheme, which is used by the mother from which the family lineage is extracted. Meghalaya people are famous for their hospitality, pleasure, and friendliness. The Khasi claim that their religion is offered to God and that it is founded on the faith of one supreme God. The founder 'U BleiNongthaw' is a human who has a sublime religion and an immense love of life. He knows life is the best blessing of God, and in the future, he will have to take account again. The Jaintias and Khasis have the same faith, but they are influenced more frequently by Hinduism. It is superstitious that Jam, like

the KhasiThlen, is a malicious spirit that brings its controller wealth and sicknesses or their victim's death. Garos trust in one sole Maker, Rabuga, who is the world's maintainer and chief. The other ghosts are the True Creator members (Fauji 2001). Sacrifices are created to please the ghosts linked to Garo's farm life but never adored. The headman is representative of the village and is morally responsible. However, several Khasi, Garo and Jaintia have been Christian, and in the Meghalayas you can see many churches and temples, mosques, gurudwaras, and monasteries. KaPemblang Nongrem Dance, a five-day religious festival of the Khasis, is held annually in the Smit village, 11 km from Shillong. The second week of April is Shad Sukmymysieum, another Khasis Festival. Bahdienkhlam, Jaintia's biggest and most vibrant festival, is held annually in October-November in Jowai Jaintia Hills. Bangladesh is held in July for a week to celebrate the Garos' Saljong. The overwhelming Christian community of the state enjoys Christmas. The rhythm and dance abode are Meghalaya. The dances are related to festivals and seasons and must be celebrated during the year. Most dances are ceremonial, educational, pastoral, funeral, and leisure. The sound of flawless pace, beautiful singing, and classical music reverberates on the ground. Musical-instruments are important to themselves. You are used to dancing, musical music, displays and devotional actions. Instrument playing varies by time and position.

2. Folk Musical Instruments of Meghalaya

In their religious rituals, holidays, marriages, and other festivities, the Meghalaya people use different kinds of musical instruments. In dance, singing, piety gathering, and other public presentations, Meghalaya musical instruments are used. The Meghalaya music is distinguished by traditional instruments, folk songs, and music (Govinda 2000). With many Punk Music Artists, the State of Meghalaya has also a flair for western music. The organ plays a significant role, and the music is an essential part of the Northeast. In the area, you can find many ingenious musical instruments.

Some of them are as follows:

Except for Garo, contemporary musical instruments, and songs, Garos' music is traditional. In general, the traditional musical instruments of Garo can be grouped into four categories (Harsh 2013).

- A) Idiophones:** Self-resonant and resonant materials – Kakwa, Nanggilsi, Guridomik, and Kamaljakmora, gong of all sorts, Rangkilding, Nogri, Rangbong, etc.

- B) Aero phone:** The tone of a wind instrument that vibrates in a pipe when blown– Adil, Singga, Sanai, Kal, Bolbijak, Illep or Illip, Olongna, Tarabeng, Imbanggi, Akok or Dakok, Bangsi rosi, Tilara or Taragaku, Bangsi mande, Otekra, Wa'ppe or Wa'pek.
- C) Chordophone:** Stringed Musical instrument – Sarenda, Dotrong, Chigring, Dimchrang or Kimjim, Gongmima or Gonggna.
- D) Membranophone:** which are spread over a frame with skins or membranes – Ambengdama, Chisakdama, Atong dama, Garaganching dama, Ruga and Chibok dama, Dual-matchi dama, Nagra, Kram etc.

3. A Description of some famous musical instruments of Garo Community:

3.1. Kram

It has a drum smaller than a Dama. It is made from wood and cowhide covered at the ends. On one side, the Kram is bigger and on the other side it tapers much thinner. They are only seen on solemn occasions, such as funerals and some annual religious events, While the Duma is still used. The Kram cannot be separated from the house of the owner except during such serious times or the Garos is feared to inflict any misfortune.

Figure 1



Kram Musical Instrument

3.2. Dama

It has a long, thick drum that's the thickest in the midst and shrimps on either end. It can be 4 to 5 metres long and consists of timber. A cylindrical bifacial wooden drum. Both faces are skin covered, laced with red belts. Golden and red colors, light. Has been horizontally suspended from the neck and both hands played. Used by tribes from the Meghalayan hilly regions.

Figure 2



Dama Musical Instrument

3.3. Nagra

It is a fantastic drum made of cowhides filled with pot of barrels. It is just to be beaten to call people for a festive or entertainment rally in Nokma's home. The Nagra is a holy property and as such can be owned by the Nokmas only; it cannot be removed from the Nokma building. The Garos claim that if Nagra is taken out of the house of Nokma, the disaster is likely to visit the founders. The Nagra can only be defeated by its owner or a partnership, and not by someone else.

Figure 3



Nagara Musical Instruments

3.4. Gongmina or Jew's Harp

The Jew harp consists of an approximately 4 cm long, half inch high, fine slit of bamboo. It is so sliced that the middle of the brief with just one end flows down a small tongue. One end of a little string is tied to the Jew's harp and a little handle is connected to the other end. It is positioned between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand so that it touches the tooth, and the cord is fastened with a sharp pull of the right handle.

3.5. The Trumpets

In the accompaniment of the drums, there are two types of Garo trumpet.

a) Adil - It is a thin, bamboo-mouthed trumpet built with a buffalo horn on top of it. It takes about six inches.

b) Singga - It is literally the entire horn of the buffalo and only two to three times a breath can create the sound.

3.6. The flutes

Any Garo flute is made from only bamboo. They are not painted or registered.

a) Otokra - It is a large bamboo flute with a diameter of around 3 feet and 1 inch with just 2 holes.

b) Illongma - It has a tiny three-step bamboo flute.

c) Bangsi - The flute is slightly smaller than other notes.

d) Imbingi - It's another kind of flute shaped from a small bamboo fragment, closed on one end and open on the other. The exterior hard cover of the bamboo, leaving the soft white section underneath, is pooled. The mouthpiece is a half-inch square opening from the top of the closed end. A slight slip or tongue is cut from the mouthpiece downward through the top surface of the stripped bamboo, by cutting them down to about half an inch on both sides.

e) Dakok- It has a Flute Longest.

3.7. Rang or Gongs

The Rangs and gongs are brass, brass, or basin covers. They are used by the Garos for different purposes. The dances and festivals are played as musical instruments. They are often seen as a gold deposit, when the wealth and social status of an individual is defined by the amount of rank that you wear. Before the cremation, a dead Nokma is put on the line. The coupable needs to pay the fine in Rangs in the event of court disputes. These gongs have age significance.

3.8. Cymbals

The Garos are found in two styles of cymbals. The following are they.

a) Kakwa - This is a rather similar cymbal to that which the Hindus use in the plains.

b) Nenggilsi - It's less than the first cymbal. It looks like two little brass cups. These cymbals are used in tune with another instrument by striking each other.

There are other instruments besides those played by the Garos. Different drums such as Kynphong, Naila, and Padiah are available. Normally they are circular, but several are angled on their heads like a cucumber in the middle. Having adequately dried and oiled, the wood frame is hallowed by chopping oak, the heads are left bare and then covered with skin pads. In both cases, these drums are hanged from the two sides of the shoulder to the chest with a wire and the drummer beats his head with his hand. Like drums, the harps are distinct, like Singdiengphong, a simple harp that is built on eight strings from the soft bamboo of the bark and reeds of bamboo. Diengphong is done as a song or tune accompaniment.

1. **Natik:** Small accompaniment drum
2. **Dimchang/Kimjim:** Flat instrument made of bamboo
3. **Chengchap:** Cymbals
4. **Chigring:** Stump of bamboo with strings.
5. **Serenda:** It is a violin type of instrument.

4. A Description of some famous musical instruments of Khasi and Jaintia Community:

Music is an essential part of Khasi existence, and whatever it lacks in the formal refinement of existing schools and types of music; in skillful rendering it constitutes simplicity, elegance, and a certain complexity. Music in Khasi Life-every birth-to-death festival and ceremony is loaded with music and dance (Mukherjee 2005). The natural sounds enmeshed in the songs can be heard the buzz of bees, the cries of birds, the cry of a wild animal, the gurgling of a creek. One of the essential types of Khasi music is the 'phawar,' which is more like a 'chant' than a song and is mostly written on-the-spot, impromptu, to accommodate the moment. Other music styles include past ballads & lines, famous heroes' deeds, and martyr lamentations. Moreover, fascinating are Khasi musical instruments (Ksing Shynrang, Ksing Kynthei) because they support the dance and tune. It uses flutes and drums of different kinds. The ubiquitous drum plays the most prolific position. Not only do drums have the festival rhythm, but they are also used to 'invite' people to the gathering (Orcher 2005). "Tangmuri" (a form of flageolet); "Shaw Shaw" (Cymbals); percussion instruments of different kinds, including "Nakra" (Big Drum) and "Ksing Padiah" (small drum); "Besli" (flute for "solo" recitals) and a number of other wind instruments such as "Sharati", "Shyngwiang" (sad or joyful for various occasions); the "Duitara" (a stringed instrument played with a wooden string); Today the "Spanish Guitar" is more popular and is commonly used for both seasonal and general entertainment occasions.

People of Jaintia are rich in their traditional patrimony. The customs, poetry, dances, art, and crafts of the Jaintia tribe are reflected in their culture. The tribe is known for their creative weaving, woodcarving, cane, and bamboo. This is the tribe's primary trade, as well. They are also known for weaving carpets and silk and producing musical instruments, jewelry, and articles from pineapple fibres. This district's residents are fond of music. The Pnar people expressed their praise by music for rivers, hills, valleys, land, etc. Ramynthei, duitara, ksing / nakra, ramynken, shawiang, tangmuri, etc are traditional musical instruments (Zakir 2011).

Some Traditional Musical Instruments of Khasi and Jaintia:

1. **Beslie:** It is a Bamboo Flute.
2. **Tangmuri:** Clarinet
3. **Duitara:** Guitar-like musical instrument with muga strings.
4. **Ksing/Nakra:** Drums were applied on numerous occasions.
5. **Dymphong:** Flat instrument made of bamboo.
6. **Maryngod**
7. **Marngthing**
8. **Padiah:** Small drums with fine sticks to beat.
9. **Singthap:** Beat side drums with a stick on one side and hands on the other side.
10. **Tanglod:** Bamboo Flute
11. **Ksing Kynthei:** The drum was only reserved for women performers. Applying Wax on one hand
12. **Shaw Shaw:** Cymbals
13. **Sharati:** Used flute at death ceremony.

Figure 4



Khasi Musical Instruments

4.1. Duitara - Duitara is a two-stringed, religious guitar-like musical instrument. It is the traditional Meghalayan Khasis and Jaintias musical instrument. Composed of sturdy hard wood, you can play Duitara with a

wooden pick. It has 4 holes at the top, mounted to keep the string in tune with wooden pegs. The Duitara body is coated with animal skin.

Figure 5



Duitara

4.2. Ksing Shynrang: A cylindrical bifacial wooden body bound by parchment and laced by leather straps to the body. Rings of iron are threaded into the drum tuning braces. Your right cheek is bigger than your left one. The tiny face played with a stick, and the bigger left face played with a fist. It is used by the Khasi culture of Jaintia hills in a religious dance festival called "Ka Shad Nong Krim."

4.3. Ksing-Phong: Fifteen tubes of bamboo bound together, about two feet tall. The skin of the bamboo sticks is isolated from the body and discarded. Between the skin and the sticks on both corners are two bamboo sticks and two long sticks in the middle. Kept with a fist and hit with a hammer, with the other fist rhythmically. Used in Khasi of Jaintia hills and neighbouring areas in religious and festival dances.

4.4. Tangmuri: The tangmuri is a double-edged conical bore wind musical instrument used in the north-eastern region of India by the Meghalaya state's Hynniew Trep people. The tangmuri is used by musicians playing for folk dances and other local ceremonies such as cremations performed according to the indigenous faith, Niam Khasi. When played by the musician, the tangmuri delivers a very high-pitched sound. The instrument consists of a twisted conical-bore wooden chanter, approximately 20 cm long, with seven finger holes on the front, and a separate flared

twisted 15 cm long wooden bell connected by a push-fit to the chanter. The double-edged tube is connected to a thin conical-bore metal tube c.3 cm long, woven with thread to keep it in place in the chanter.

Figure 6



Tangmuri Musical Instrument

4.5. Sharati: This Flute was used during the ritual of burial. Another flute is the sharati, with some eight major holes. Her noisha is twisted slightly.

4.6. Tanglod: It is a Flute of Bamboo. Tanglod is a flute with both noisha and reading attached to it.

4.7. Beslie: It is a Flute of Bamboo. Besli is a pipe that is reduced from a thin bamboo cut in between the two sides, the bark is properly scrapped with six or seven holes drilled into its surface and is much like the eight-hole chuwiang.

4.8. The Trumpets

Two styles of trumpet are played. Ronsing and Turoi are primarily trumpets.

- a) **Ronsing** is a naturally bended horn of a buffalo, the interior is hallowed, and a small opening is made on both sides.
- b) **Turoi** is a trumpet with a broad rim made of solid brass with further elongated bends upward.

There are few cymbals in which the Kynshaw consists of two smooth copper plates (with several markings and markings gravitated on its surface). The Majra is made of brass with two curved or pointed surfaces.

They are played at large dances by smashing them together with drums and flutes.

4.9. Bom: A single large kettle drum started out, chiseled from soft oak. With the aid of leather belts, the broad mouth covered with thick hide attached. Playing with two sticks and padding. Typically used in public advertisements, called "Pyrtá Shnong" and used in Meghalaya dance festivals.

4.10. Mieng: A bamboo harp made of Jews. In the middle, a vibrating tongue is cut off. Firmly held between the lips and plucked by fingertips with one hand. The mouth is behaving as a resonator. It is used by Meghalaya and adjacent cowherds and shepherds.

4.11. Khasi tribe guitars: It is played like a sitar. It is made of wood. The structure of this guitar is a little bigger than our acoustic guitar and Hindustani Slide guitar. This guitar is played in various orchestras in Meghalaya.

Figure 7



Khasi Tribe Guitar

4.12. Khasi tribe violins: This instrument is a famous instrument of Meghalaya. It is made of wood. It is played by both hands. Used by tribes of hilly areas of Meghalaya. This violin is played in various festivals, puja, and orchestras in Meghalaya.

Figure 8



Khasi Tribe Violin

4.13. Serja: It is a type of instrument used by the Bodos which has four strings and a small bow made of bamboo strips is traditionally played. The bow string is made of a small bunch of hairs from the tail of a horse. The log of Sijou (*Euphorbia splendens*) is the best known for making Serja.

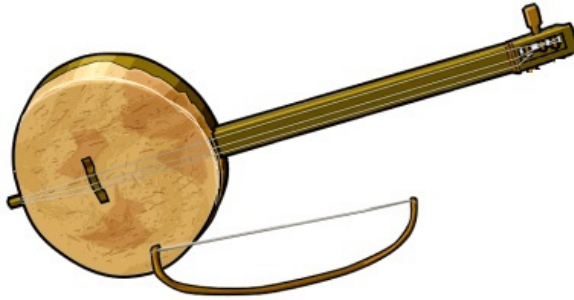
Figure 9



Serja Musical Instrument

4.14. Kum Dang Dong: It is a Ektara like musical instrument. It is used in religious dance festivals, various orchestras of Khasi community of Jaintia hills.

Figure 10



Kum Dang Dong

4.15. Marynthing: The Marynthing is an ancient, single-string string instrument. It is used as an instrument for a drone. Another five-stringed Marynthing was also demonstrated. It is used in the Khasi Culture of Jaintia Hills religious dance festival.

4.16. Saranga: It is a string musical instrument. It is made of wood. The people of Tiwa Community play this instrument. It is used in the religious dance festivals of Tiwa community.

Figure 11



Serja, Kum Dang Dong, Marynthing and Saranga

5. Conclusion

Meghalaya Instrumental Music likewise should broaden its frame of reference and acquaint new structures to staying up with the effect of technological turns of events. Meghalaya Instrumental Music has its own basics which depend on earlier examinations of the contemporary craftsmen of that time. This unrest has additionally energized new trials in various parts of Meghalaya Instrumental Music. New examinations bring about the development of new idea designs, new practices, new structures, and better approaches to act. These angles have been shrouded in the exploration work while talking about arrangement and combination music in a performing perspective and creation of new instruments in assembling parts of Meghalaya Instrumental Music.

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