



Banda Ligaya's medals from the 1932 Manila Carnival in which they won the prestigious First National Band Championship, competing against the country's top bands. (Medals in my possession) Photograph by Alonso Nichols.

GENDERING THE PHILIPPINE BRASS BAND: WOMEN OF THE LIGAYA BAND AND NATIONAL UNIVERSITY BAND, 1920s-1930s

Mary Talusan

By the early 20th century, women featured prominently in Philippine musical life as music teachers in schools and colleges, singers in church choirs, soloists on harp and piano, and as performers in all-female string orchestras such as the "Orquestra de Dalagas" (Bañas, 1924: 123). In 1928, an all-female brass band called the Banda Ligaya made its debut at the Manila Carnival and won first place in its highly competitive band competition. But, despite women's visibility and achievement in many aspects of public life during the early decades of American rule, not everyone welcomed their participation. The growing number of female members in traditionally male brass bands around the archipelago greatly troubled one church official, leading him to declare that female musicians should be banned from the band.