

**Latino Music:  
A View of  
Its Diversity and Strength**

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**Portland Public Schools  
Hispanic-American Baseline Essay  
1996**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
THE ROOTS OF LATINO MUSIC IN THE NEW WORLD .....	3
<i>The Mexican Tradition</i> .....	3
The Indigenous Musical Cultures of México .....	4
Colonial Education of the Indians .....	5
The Mexican Regional Traditions .....	6
<i>Música Norteña or the Texas-Mexican Border Style</i> . . . .	7
<i>Spanish Music of New México</i> .....	7
<i>Hispanic Musical Traditions of the Caribbean</i> .....	9
Puerto Rico .....	9
Cuba.....	11
The Music of Brazil .....	12
<i>Music of the Andean Regions</i> .....	13
<i>Latin Music in the United States Today</i> .....	13
TEACHER'S RESOURCES .....	15
<i>México</i> .....	16
Indigenous Cultures .....	16
<i>The Lacandón</i> .....	16
<i>The Yaqui</i> .....	16
<i>The Tzotzil Indians of Chiapas</i> .....	17
Mariachi .....	18
Sones Jarochos.....	19
The Brass Bands of Northern México .....	20
Marimba Music of México and Central America.....	21
<i>Música Norteña, or the Texas-Mexican Border Style</i> ... ..	23
Spanish Music of New México.....	24
Hispanic Musical Traditions of the Caribbean.....	24
Puerto Rico .....	24
<i>The Highland Culture</i> .....	24
<i>Afro-Puerto Rican Music</i> .....	25
Cuba.....	27
<i>Guajiro Music</i> .....	27
<i>The Danza</i> .....	27
<i>Afro-Cuban Forms</i> .....	28
The Music of Brazil.....	31
Music of the Andean Regions.....	34
The Spanish Influence .....	35
A Thriving Tradition .....	35
MUSICAL EXAMPLES .....	37
México—Indigenous Music .....	37
Mexican and Central American Regional Styles .....	37
Marimba Music from México and Central America .....	37
Mexican Music in the United States .....	37
Latino Music in the Caribbean: Puerto Rican Mountain Music ..	37
Afro-Puerto Rican Music .....	38
Cuban Music .....	38

Brazilian Music . . . . . 38  
Andean Music . . . . . 38  
REFERENCES . . . . . 39  
ANNOTATED LIST OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE REFERENCES FOR LATIN AND  
CARIBBEAN MUSIC . . . . . 40  
PUBLISHERS OF MULTICULTURAL MUSIC-EDUCATION MATERIALS . . . 46

## INTRODUCTION

In the United States today, we are blessed with a diversity of Spanish-speaking and other Latin American cultures in our midst—brought here by people from many different areas of the hemisphere. In attempting to understand and appreciate these cultures, we can learn much from their music.

Surprisingly, Latin American music is a subject about which little has been written that is not either very general or highly specialized. This essay is intended to serve as a reasonably comprehensive guide to the various forms and styles of music and musical cultures that have made their way to the United States from neighboring countries to the south and southeast.

For many who are unfamiliar with the vast array of musical languages current in the largely Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America, the first assumption is that they are similar or identical. True, there are intriguing resemblances, parallels, and similarities in the haunting strains of Andean music, the Spanish-tinged music of Argentina and Chile, the African-influenced musical forms of the Antilles, and the complex of forms found in México and in Venezuela, Colombia, and other countries of Central America. Yet the musical language of each area is distinct, and within each we encounter a huge array of musical genres with clear distinctions of form and style. Taken together, these forms are again quite different from, albeit related generically to, the music heard in Spain today.

This panorama of musical expressions has been at once the result and the reflection of Latin America's history. Each cultural stratum—the indigenous American; the politically and economically dominating European; the African, brought through slavery; and most recently the northern European and North American, transmitted by the contemporary mass media—has contributed to the wealth and variety of Latin music in the New World. Beyond the places where the music originated, beyond the enclaves in the U.S. where its traditions are strongest, the general influence of Latin music has been slow, steady, and at various times intense enough to be a clear and marked influence on the mainstream of popular American (U.S.) culture.

One of the earliest influences that made the music of the United States distinctively

*American* is African musical forms and styles. This influence can be heard today in popular, folk, and classical music. It was heard early on in ragtime, which in turn influenced such distinctively American (U.S.) composers as Victor Herbert and John Philip Sousa.

Within this distinctive American (U.S.) musical language, the influence of Latin music has been strong. In the oldest examples of the blues tradition, found in the compositions of W. C. Handy, tango rhythm is used frequently. That rhythm is made memorable in the "St. Louis Woman" section of his famous *St. Louis Blues*. From musicians who were playing the the northeastern cities of the United States, like pianist Eubie Blake, we learn that the *tango* was frequently included in many compositions. (In fact, this tango was really a *habanera*, which had been introduced directly from Cuba or through the popular music of México.) In New Orleans, through the compositions and descriptions of Ferdinand Jelly Roll Morton, we learn of the important spice provided by the "Spanish Tinge," once again the *habanera*.

The first orchestra of Black musicians to be recorded in the U.S., the famous Syncopated Orchestra of James Reece Europe (renowned for providing the dance music for Irene and Vernon Castle), chose on their first recording date in 1914 to play a *samba* and a *maxixe*, two popular dances from Brazil. Shortly after World War I and through the early years of the Great Depression, the tango became the rage, but this time it was imported from Argentina, a musical form completely different from the tango of the preceding twenty years in American (U.S.) music. During the early 1930s and on until well after World War II, in response to the growing influence and prestige of Cuban music throughout Latin America, Cuban dance forms again became the rage in the U.S. The craze started with the *rumba* and *conga*, and continued in the late 1940s and early 1950s with the *mambo*, followed by the *cha-cha-chá*, *pachanga*, and *charanga* and the establishment of several Latin musicians in the popular mainstream. During the late 1940s Latin music was once again fused with jazz in the music of Dizzy Gillespie, Miguelito Valdez, and Pérez Prado.

With the isolation of Cuba from the United States in the late 1950s, the Latin American influence on music in the U.S. shifted to Brazil and the *bossa nova*. The most famous of these songs was probably *The Girl From Ipanema*, by Brazilian composer, Antonio Carlos Jobim. The influence of the bossa nova beat was most pronounced in the early 1960s and continued well into the 1970s as the standard rhythm to accompany popular

ballads. The now-displaced Cuban music (displaced by rock) became the domain of a variety of musicians from all over Latin America, and under the generic name of *salsa* continues today to be an important element in the general popular framework of American (U.S.) music. While perhaps never so strong as to entirely dominate the American (U.S.) popular music scene, the various influences from Latin American have, at times, been very strong and have never been far from what most Americans (U.S.) were hearing.

### **THE ROOTS OF LATINO MUSIC IN THE NEW WORLD**

Three main cultural layers interact to make up the myriad strands of Latin music in this hemisphere. These are the indigenous American, the European (in this case the Spanish and Portuguese), and the various African cultures (primarily those from West Africa) that took root here. The culture of each region, each nation of Hispanic America—and by extension the Latino cultures within the United States—reflects some combination of these three influences.

In some countries, Argentina and Chile for example, the predominant cultural strain in most regions is European. In other places, México and the Andean region, for example, a mixture of indigenous and European influences dominates. The entire Caribbean region and the coastal areas of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú, and Brazil reflect a mixture of European and African elements. This, however, is to paint a very broad picture. Each country of Latin America consists of a complex mixture of many cultures. Some countries, Venezuela and Colombia in particular, boast a great richness and variety of cultures, some African, others European, and yet others indigenous. What is noteworthy in all of this, however, is the uniqueness of the *combination* of cultures within each nation.

#### ***The Mexican Tradition***

For many Americans (U.S.), Latin America and México are almost synonymous. What little they might know of Latin America is about México, and anything Latin American is thought to be Mexican. What a surprise to travelers who go beyond México to other areas of Latin America, beyond the now almost universal Taco Bells, for they find that other Latin Americans do not eat tacos and that Latin rhythm which "South of the

Border" conjures up for many Americans (U.S.) is really of Caribbean origin.

There are, in fact, many Méxicos. There is the México of the big cities, like México City and Guadalajara, whose culture draws heavily on the *criollo*, or Creole, traditions of the New World, many of which originated in Spain. (This Spanish-tinged culture, by the way, is shared by the city dwellers of Buenos Aires, Argentina; Santiago, Chile; Caracas, Venezuela; and San José, Costa Rica.) but beyond the big cities lie several strata of cultures from the country's many regions. These regions' cultural influences *also* survive in the big cities, brought there by ever-growing numbers of transplanted villagers and townfolk from all over the country.

Before the Mexican Revolution began around 1910, the various regions of México were rather isolated. Travel from one region to another was neither easy nor frequent, and each region was able to retain strong local characteristics that are exemplified in its music. All these musical styles and forms had their origins in Spain and to varying degrees reflected admixtures of indigenous Mexican elements and, in a few rare cases, African cultural admixtures.

### **The Indigenous Musical Cultures of México**

The indigenous peoples discovered by the Spanish were grouped into several language and culture groups, the most powerful being the Aztec, Toltec, Tarascan, Zapotec, and Mayan. These peoples were all descendants of early inhabitants who had traveled across a land bridge in the Bering Straits in about 25,000 B.C., then slowly worked their way south until they reached the southern end of South America 600 generations, or 18,000 years, later.

What the Spanish discovered in México was a network of cultures connected by war and commerce, largely under the domination of one warlike group, the Aztecs, who had, in fact, only been in control for a few hundred years and who followed upon several generations of high civilizations. These cultures had not discovered the use of metal tools and, having no large draft animals, had no practical use for the wheel except in children's toys. The measurement of time and an accurate calendar were important to these people, and it is likely that rhythmic precision in music was, too.

The calendar system resembles the one used in ancient China and relies on a complex method of charting the passing of time through two synchronous systems. When the two systems synchronized once every 52 years and the Aztec century ended, the people feared for the continuation of the world, and important ritual ceremonies were performed.

While the first Spanish, soldiers and priests alike, were aghast at the rituals performed by the Aztec of México, some of the first monks who wrote descriptions of these rituals expressed amazement at the musical precision of the performances, noting the exactness of their intonation and the rhythmic accuracy of the drumming. They said that the drums were tuned to the pitch of the singers' voices; that the performances began slowly and at a low pitch, gradually increasing in both tempo and pitch as the performance went on; and that the drums were regularly retuned to match the pitch of the singers' voices.

The monks' admiration was not enough to save either the music or the musicians. In the Spaniards' zeal to end what they viewed as the barbaric practices of the Aztecs, they had all the priests, teachers, and musicians put to death. Large numbers of books were destroyed for fear the Aztecs' ideas might not die. (In fact the Aztec practice of ritual human sacrifice came from the ancient Mexican belief, long predating the Aztecs themselves, that the cycle and regular rebirth of the sun depended on offering human sacrifices.) In the end, hundreds of thousands of Indians lost their lives for no other reason than that their ideas conflicted with their conquerors'.

### **Colonial Education of the Indians**

In the process of reeducating the indigenous peoples of México, Spanish priests built special schools that all the natives were required to attend. The task was formidable because the population of México was incredibly diverse. Even today, after the loss of several entire groups of Indians, over 260 separate languages are spoken from northern México to Guatemala. Many of the Indians speak two or three languages, including Spanish.

In the slow struggle to forge a common European culture for this great variety of peoples, music was one of the important subjects to impart. Singing and the playing of

violin, guitar, and harp in the Spanish style were taught. The indigenous peoples were absolutely forbidden to play the old music of pre-Spanish times and eventually, with their newly learned music as a source, a new music developed. But as with the African slaves in the United States, to whom anything resembling African musical practice was forbidden, the people of México retained some of the musical ideas from pre-Hispanic times—ideas that were gradually absorbed into the new musical style of México.

The process of inculcating the native population into a European educational tradition was a long and slow one, and some Indian groups—particularly those living in the northern areas of México and closest to the United States—were able to resist with force and vigor Spanish and (later) Mexican soldier and priest. Among the various indigenous groups in northern México, such as the Yaqui, Seri, Cora, Tarahumara, and Huichol, we still find musical practices that strongly suggest possible antecedents in pre-Hispanic times and that further suggest pre-European roots for many of the seeming "colonialized" musical practices of indigenous people living further south in México.

### **The Mexican Regional Traditions**

With the arrival in México of increasing numbers of Spanish settlers, new cities and towns grew up beyond the main colonial garrisons and Indian settlements, and the old indigenous population centers gradually became more Hispanic. In these towns, a new *mestizo* population (a mixture of Spanish and Indian) began to appear and dominate. It is the culture of this population that we think of as typically Mexican.

The music of this group developed in the old Indian mission schools and contained elements of current Spanish folk and popular styles. From this combination came the various regional styles of México, each of which in turn evolved its own style. Many of these regions have contributed well-known compositions, in some cases one or two and in others several, which have become adopted into the general culture of México while remaining symbols of regional pride in their provinces of origin. Here we will examine a few of the most influential and well-known regional styles.

### **Mexican Music in the United States**

### ***Música Norteña or the Texas-Mexican Border Style***

In southern Texas, in the valley of the Rio Grande, a unique kind of music evolved that most Mexicans associate with the northern territory of the country and Mexican Hispanics in the United States associate it with their own struggles. South Texas is an area where the Mexican population has never been a minority and Mexican culture has remained strong, as have regular cultural ties with México.

*Música norteña* draws from the traditional and popular music of the original inhabitants of Texas, before it was annexed from México, and from the Mexican musical styles brought to the area as part of continuous cultural contact with México. Another very important influence in this music was German and Bohemian polka bands that were scattered around this part of Texas. From all these elements came a new style, Mexican but with clear polka threads mixed with the Mexican ballad, or *corrido*, and more recently popular Mexican forms like the *huapango*, a unique form of the *son* from the inland area of Veracruz whose singing style has strong Indian elements.

### ***Spanish Music of New México***

In the mountains of northern New México and southern Colorado lives a group of people who trace their roots back to those early residents who resided there when the region was part of New Spain and before México became independent of Spain. Although many of the inhabitants of this region still refer to themselves as Spanish rather than Mexican, this is largely a matter of the period in history from which they choose to claim their origins.

These people share much in common with the oldest Mexican residents of the states of California and Texas, although they were largely isolated for many years from the larger urban culture of the United States and from the kind of regular cultural contact with new cultural developments in México. As a result of their isolation, they managed to preserve, in their culture, strong vestiges of a tradition that goes back to the times of the earliest Spanish and Mexican settlers in the Southwest, to a time when only a few Anglo-Americans had yet ventured there.

The music of New México/Colorado draws from a common repertoire of song and

dance types that were popular in many regions of the Western world during the nineteenth century: waltzes, schottisches, and mazurkas. However, these dance pieces, as they were played in southern Colorado and northern New México, had distinctive Spanish roots and came filtered through the contemporary polite urban culture of México, which itself was strongly influenced by what was popular in Spain at that time.

## ***Hispanic Musical Traditions of the Caribbean***

### **Puerto Rico**

At the far southern end of the Greater Antilles in the Caribbean—culturally and geographically but not politically remote from the United States—Puerto Rico has through chance and fortune, or misfortune, found itself linked to the United States in a relationship that continues to be unique. As a result of the Spanish-American War, the United States eventually permitted Cuba to go its own way, but Puerto Rico remained tied to the U.S. as a dependent state—albeit one that is clearly and strongly a distinct Latin American culture. Puerto Rico has only the thinnest veneer of what might be termed a U.S. American culture and has generated several important musical forms that have had a strong international impact.

The cultural and historical background of Puerto Rico parallels that of Cuba. The first Spanish colonizers arrived to find the Indian population unable and unwilling to do the arduous work that the commercial potential of the island demanded. Subsequently, the Spanish killed off the Taino Indians, the original inhabitants of the island, and replaced them with an African labor force brought in by the slave trade.

Spanish settlers who made their livelihood through the cultivation of small plantations lived in the highlands of the island and were known as *jibaros*. Their small farms were largely family businesses and did not require the employment of slaves. Thus the culture of the highland jíbaro in Puerto Rico represents and retains the strongest elements of Spanish culture found on the island.

In the lowlands, and especially around the major coastal cities of San Juan and Ponce, overseas trade flourished, demanding a large labor force. It was here that the largest concentration of enslaved Africans grew and the strongest Afro-Puerto Rican elements of the culture developed. Today, a few strongly African villages or towns, such as Loiza Aldea near San Juan, remain; but it is in the admixture of African elements into Puerto Rican music that Africa's greatest impact lies. From this mixture came two important forms—the bomba and the plena—and these forms became a powerful force in the music of Puerto Rico. Later, these forms figured strongly in the development of the contemporary musical style known as salsa to such a degree that Puerto Rico can be thought of as an equal partner with Cuba in the development of this now international

form.

In the larger cities of the island, there also developed several popular forms of old dances that date from the late nineteenth century and come from the same tradition that spread the waltz, polka, and schottisch around much of the world. In the polite society of the day, Puerto Ricans attended social dances that consisted of the *danza*, *shotis*, *mazuca*, and *vals*. While these forms remained popular for many years, particularly the *danza*, they were gradually amplified by newer forms from other regions of the Caribbean, like the *guaracha* from Cuba and the *merengue* from the Dominican Republic. This combination of traditional forms continued and continues to grow, today being very close to the salsa forms of Latin countries and enclaves, wherever they are found.

In addition to its own native and original forms, Puerto Rico has made important contributions to the vast body of Pan-Latin American popular music. Although many of these styles of music, such as the rumba, conga, guaracha, and bolero, have their roots in Cuba, they form a body of music for dancing and vehicles for song that are used throughout Latin America. Two of the most famous names whose music is known all over Latin America are Rafael Hernandez and Pedro Flores, musicians who have added richly to the Pan-Latin style. More recently, Cortijo and Ismael Rivera have added greatly to the salsa. While retaining a clear Puerto Rican flavor, their contributions have made them important players in the overall development of that style.

## Cuba

Cuba is something of a musical mystery in Latin America. It is the largest of the islands of the Antilles and was settled in much the same way as the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. The first Spanish settlers arrived to find an indigenous population that could not stand up to the demands of forced plantation labor, which the full exploitation of the land required. This population was all killed either by being used brutally as forced labor or through the introduction of new diseases. As the indigenous population was replaced by Africans brought in through the slave trade, Cuba, like Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, developed an Afro-Hispanic culture. But from Cuba, a particularly unique and powerful creative energy flowed for many years.

With the exception of the Argentine tango and the Brazilian samba and bossa nova, almost all other popular Latin American dance forms have come from Cuba. These

dances have exerted a powerful influence on the music of other Latin American countries and even the United States and Europe. From the famous habanera in Bizet's opera *Carmen* and Ravel's habaneras in *L'Heure Espagnole* and other compositions, to the contemporary salsa in the United States, it has been Cuban rhythms and dance patterns that have dominated and—until the United States blockade of Cuba in 1958—generated new dance crazes that swept the world. In the history of global popular music, there has never been anything to duplicate the massive creative force and influence Cuba has represented, and there seems no adequate way to explain it other than through the excellence of the music itself.

As in Puerto Rico, the Spanish settlers who came to Cuba came largely from Andalucía in southern Spain. While it appears evident that the Africans who were brought to Cuba as slave labor were from many different regions of Africa, it is also clear that it was the Yoruba among them who quickly became organized and found a means of continuing the performance of their rituals, as they did in Haiti and Brazil.

In attempting to understand the powerful influence of African musical elements on Latin American music, it is also important to realize that the slave policy in Latin countries was very different from that in the United States. These cultures—the French, Portuguese, and Spanish—came out of a common background of old Roman law that recognized that slaves had certain minimal rights and were human beings.

### **The Music of Brazil**

In the development of its musical culture, Brazil shows parallels to the pattern of other countries, in particular Cuba and the United States. One clear parallel is a strong African cultural impact on the musical traditions of the culture.

However, Brazil is unique in the world of Latin American music in that its European cultural traditions are from Portugal. For most Americans in this country, the cultural differences between Spain and Portugal may appear insignificant, but to the bearers of those two cultures, they are immense. These differences have created varying responses to the challenge of life in the New World and over a period of more than 300 years have become more pronounced. A unique Portuguese melody type and the expression of *saudade*, a special kind of nostalgia, mark the music of Brazil with a clear

Portuguese flavor.

### ***Music of the Andean Regions***

When they arrived in the Andes, the Spanish conquerors met a second great civilization in the New World. As in the case of the Aztecs of the Valley of México, the Incas' empire was only one in a long line of civilizations. Their cultural realm ranged over what is today Perú, Bolivia, Northern Chile, and Ecuador and its influence spread to the Amazon region of Brazil and on to Venezuela. A great number of different languages were spoken in this area, but the people speaking Quechua and Aymara dominated.

For their part, the Spanish were primarily interested in obtaining gold and silver and in enslaving the native population as forced labor. They were little concerned with the marvelous architecture of Andean cities, the fineness of Andean textiles, or the beauty of Andean ceramics. They also had little regard for the Incas' music.

Of that music, we know little, but we do know that there were no stringed instruments in the New World. Rather, the people of the Andes made music on panpipes, other kinds of flutes, and drums. While we can be certain that the music must have changed since that time, we can also surmise from recent performances by indigenous peoples that ancient Andean music must have been exciting and unusual.

### ***Latin Music in the United States Today***

The old idea of America as a cultural melting pot is not something very many Americans (U.S.) believe exists any more. Now, if we are to survive, what we once thought was strength in unity must become strength in diversity. A recognition of the existence and scope of this diversity may be a significant first step. Many of the musical cultures of Latin America that have been described above have also found a home in the United States. Mexican music has spilled across the border and there are *mariaquis* and *norteño* bands in small Mexican communities and communities with no Mexican elements. Cuban music among the large number of Cubans is not surprising, but the strength and impact of salsa can be noted in most major cities in the U.S. Puerto Ricans play an important role in the salsa scene, but in addition a number of bands play *seises* and *aguinaldos* in the jíbaro style all over the eastern U.S. and even in Hawaii.

The large number of Latinos in this country's urban labor force, numerous pockets of old traditions (some only very recently rediscovered), and countless individual carriers of unique Latin American traditions together create a map of amazing diversity. A new, broader awareness of the old musical traditions of New México and Colorado—and a renewed pride in them—exists. There is a Paraguayan harpist living in Oregon and a Veracruz harpist in Southern California. There are little pockets of Spanish Canary Islanders living along the Mississippi Delta in Louisiana who still sing old Spanish *décimas*. There are several groups of Spanish from the islands of Menorca and Majorca in the Balearics living in Florida, as well as numerous Portuguese from the Azores living in California and Portuguese in Hawaii. There are Andean panpipers throughout the country. All in various ways retain something of their culture.

Increasingly we are becoming aware of this Latin presence in our culture. The National Academy of Arts and Sciences, the organization that awards the "Grammys" each year, realized some ten years ago that it had to add a Latin Music category in its awards selection process. That category has since had to be broken down into several new categories in recognition of the diversity that exists in the Latin field.

The diversity of Latino music here is immense and we would do well to understand, appreciate, and nurture it if we are to interact successfully with the people whose cultures it represents.

## TEACHER'S RESOURCES

To learn more about the specific regional styles in Latin American music, let's look at a few of them more closely. This is not a subject that can be researched easily at your local library or even the library of a large research university. When we deal with Latin American music, we are not dealing with a standard repertoire that is recorded at regular intervals. Many traditional and folk styles are recorded once, almost by chance, and then may not be recorded again for many years. Certain styles—like Mexican mariachi and currently salsa and Andean music—are almost constantly available. Others like Chilean *tonadas*, Venezuelan *joropos*, or the *jaranas* of Yucatán will rarely be found in even the largest record shops. This means that each recording is something of a unique treasure.

Tape recordings of the musical examples that follow are available. If one set was not included with this essay, these recordings can be obtained through the Professional Library at Portland Public Schools.

As you prepare to teach about Latin American music, you will find that few books deal with the subject and that the coverage that exists is neither thorough nor balanced. However, I have included a few titles that may be of some help. The best way to present Latino music is to remain flexible and imaginative, for in that way you can make a strong and lasting impression.

## México

### Indigenous Cultures

#### *The Lacandón*

One extremely exciting glimpse of ancient Mayan musical influences can be found in the music of the Lacandón, a group of indigenous peoples who live about two days' horseback ride from the closest town in the southernmost part of México. Until the late nineteenth century, the Lacandón were nearly unknown, while today they are one of the rare surviving groups of Maya Indians. The 200 remaining individuals believe that tigers will appear and destroy the world and that this is the end of the world desired by Kisin, lord of the underworld. Only the prayers of the Lacandón can avert this catastrophe, but soon all the Lacandón will be gone.

#### *Musical Example*

1. Song to Appease the Tiger

#### *The Yaqui*

Another fascinating indigenous group, the Yaqui, live in the northwest of México, mostly in the state of Sonora, and also in southern Arizona. The *Pascola* and deer dance of the Yaqui is a ceremony that seems to represent a mixture of native and colonial practices. The dances are performed in connection with feast days that are Christian in origin—Easter, Saints Days, weddings, a child's funeral. During the ceremony itself, pre-Hispanic flute and drum music is played, along with music played on the harp and violin, instruments introduced to México by the Spanish.

The ceremony takes place in a large ramada, an area covered with dried palm branches that serve as a roof. The leader of the ceremony, called the maestro, stands by the altar with the singers, who are called *cantoras*. On the other side of the ramada enclosure are grouped the participants in the secular Pascola and deer dances. The Pascola dances are accompanied by the music of the harp and violin, while the deer dance uses the music of a water drum and scraper. At the same time that the deer dance music is going on, the Pascolas are dancing to the music of the *tampa'leo*, a flute and drum played by a single person. This player fingers an end-blown flute in one hand while beating a small drum with a single stick held in the other.

During the first part of the ceremony, the Pascola dancers wear their masks on one side of their heads while dancing to the harp and violin. Later when they dance to the *tampa'le* o flute and drum, they face the deer with their masks on straight. Sometimes they appear to be frightened by the deer dancer.

From the time he is selected for the honor of being the deer dancer, the chosen individual never smiles and is always dignified. He represents the deer at all times.

In the U.S., recorded examples of Yaqui music can be found on Canyon and Indian House labels.

### ***Musical Examples***

2. Pascola Dance. Yoh' Hopoli (Mother Night Bird)
3. Maso (Deer), Tene Woi Yueria (Cocoon Bug). Water drum and scraper

### ***The Tzotzil Indians of Chiapas***

In the southern-most region of México, in the state of Chiapas close to the Guatemalan border, is an area that remains rich in indigenous cultures. Here in the highlands, distinct and separate from the "Mexicans" (mostly mestizos living in the lowlands), there are a number of indigenous groups and several distinct languages, the most prominent being *Tzotzil* and *Tzeltal*. The Indians of each village consider themselves a separate culture from those of the other villages, and even when they travel to the central city of San Cristobal de las Casas or to México City they can be recognized by their special costumes, which identify their separate villages.

The music used by the Tzotzil- and Tzeltal-speaking people, while distinct in many details, comes from a common cultural family. The Tzotzil and Tzeltal, along with other groups like the *Quiché* of Guatemala and the Lacandón, descend from the great Mayan civilization that dominated this area of México and Central America but had waned by the time the Spanish arrived. These peoples of Chiapas, the Yucatán, Guatemala and Honduras are the representative survivors of the great Mayan civilizations that flourished throughout the region.

The religious ceremonies of these peoples make use of the harp, violin, and guitar, instruments introduced in the old colonial schools that were built especially for the Indians. All three instruments are made of unvarnished wood, have steel strings, and look much as they might have when the early Jesuit priests first taught the Indians to make them.

During religious ceremonies a marching band with brass instruments may play Mexican marches outside the church. These *Ladinos*, as the Indians call them, are, Mexicans from the lowlands, usually mestizos, whom the Indians hire to provide festival music for their important holidays.

Outside, the music and the sound of fireworks fill the town plaza, but it is inside the church that the real ceremonies occur. And while the church *appears* to be a simple Roman Catholic one, the statues of the saints are all dressed in the costumes of the local village, the floor of the church is strewn with pine boughs, and the fragrance of pine resin incense fills the air.

At one side of the church, seated on a slightly raised platform, are the musicians—as many as ten or fifteen players of the harp, violin, and guitar. The musicians sing and play a series of songs that appear similar and repetitive. But, like leaves on a tree, no two are exactly alike.

**Note:** There is a Nonesuch LP of Music of Chiapas.

**Musical Example: Tzotzil Music**

4. Zinacantan: Harp, violin, guitar with singing

### **Mariachi**

Originating in the states of Jalisco and Michoacán in southwestern México, the mariachi ensemble has grown to such immense popularity within and beyond México that mariachi music has become synonymous with México. The ensemble evolved over the years from a small string band of combined violins, guitars, and harp to what has today become the more or less standard ensemble of two trumpets, two or more violins, guitar, *vihuela* (a small guitar), and *guitarrón*, a large bass guitar. Although in the minds of most Mexicans the combination of trumpets, violins, and guitars of different sizes has come to represent the sound of mariachi, the music's evolution was gradual and sporadic. At various times, harp, flute, clarinet, and even trombone have been used.

The ensemble and its music have become so much the subject of local regional pride that even the origin of the word mariachi has been the subject of broad speculation, with arguments ranging from the French *mariage*, or wedding, to a native Tarascan word from the region of Cocula, thought by some to be the birthplace of the mariachi. The traditional repertoire of the mariachi ensemble consisted of the local sones of the Michoacán and Jalisco regions. A son is a type of composition in a moderate-to-rapid 6/8 rhythm in which the melody and accompanying rhythm vary by the alternation in various patterns of three groups of two eighth notes and two groups of three. Among the most famous and well-known sones of the many from the Jalisco and Michoacán regions are *La Negra*, *El Pasa Calles*, *El Pasajero*, and *Las Olas*.

Since the mariachi became one of the most widespread of traditional ensembles, it has been adapted to a variety of music. From the 1930s the mariachi was extensively used in the popular Mexican film genre and came to be the standard accompanying ensemble for such well-known Mexican singers as Jorge Negrete, Pedro Infante, José Jiménez, and Miguel Aceves Mejía. In addition to the traditional sones of Jalisco and Michoacán, the mariachi was called upon to perform romantic Mexican songs with a rustic country flavor, called *rancheras*, as well as historical or romantic ballads, called *corridos*, and—as popular Mexican taste came to include them—Cuban boleros and various types of music that became popular in México.

The brilliant sound of guitars, violins and trumpets so captivated countless listeners, that the mariachis' popularity soon spread beyond southwestern México. Before long they could be heard almost anywhere in México. Today there are several mariachi groups in the United States, even a regular one playing at the Epcot Center in Orlando, Florida. Mariachis appear wherever there are large Mexican-American communities, from Washington state to Texas. There is even an important annual mariachi festival in San Antonio, Texas.

Mariachis are also well known in other Latin America countries. There is even an open-air restaurant in downtown San José, Costa Rica, where every night several mariachi bands gather to compete for the pleasure and attention of the audiences who go there to hear them.

There are numerous recordings of mariachi available in the U.S. The Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán is one the most famous. Although nowadays mariachis play any kind of music, recordings of the traditional sones and jarabes can still be found.

### **Musical Example**

5. Son Mariachi: Las Olas Los Torcazos Michoacanos

### **Sones Jarochos**

In the humid, tropical region of the state of Veracruz on the Gulf of México, another well-known form of Mexican music evolved. The term *Jarocho* is used to describe the region, its people, and its culture, including its music. The Jarocho musical style uses an ensemble of guitars, a smaller guitar that plays a hard percussive melody, and a harp, which provides melody and the bass line.

All the musicians in the ensemble also sing. The sones of the region include sections of each song in which the lead singer, and at times all the singers, have the opportunity to improvise poetry in a tradition that dates back to sixteenth-century Spain. Using a fixed pattern of syllables, the singer is expected to improvise couplets, and when engaged in a contest with others, must think of a couplet while another singer is performing. At the rapid tempo at which these sones are performed, the task of improvisation becomes a challenge.

The tradition of improvising couplets originated in Spain and spread from the court to become a form of entertainment adopted by humbler folk, but in the Caribbean this form of sung improvisation was taken up with particular vigor. We find it in the *punto* and *décima* of the peasants in the mountain regions of Cuba, in the *seis* and *aguinaldo* among the mountaineers of the Island of Puerto Rico, and in the *Polo* and *Galerón* on the Island of Margarita in Venezuela. In Cuba and in Veracruz, one finds groups of professional musicians on street corners singing songs of praise about passersby. However, if the praise is not acknowledged with a monetary gift, these songs can quickly turn to insult and humorous derision, causing great embarrassment to the person being sung about and great amusement to everyone else.

Many of the sones of the Veracruz region have their origin in the famous popular dance of southern Spain, the *fandango*. In the Andalusian region of Spain, local villages and towns each developed their own regional versions of the fandango, which came to be known by the name of that town: *Malagueña* from Málaga, *Granadinas* from Granada, *Rondeñas* from Ronda, and so on. In the Jarocho region, besides the well-known *Fandango Jarocho*, certain other compositions, likewise based on the fandango, became local favorites. Among them were *El Cascabel* or the rattlesnake, *El Coco*, or

the coconut, and *La Petenera Jarocha*.

One of the sones Jarochos—*La Bamba*— has become world famous. This son differs from other sones Jarochos in that its rhythm is quadratic—that is, it can be counted in 4/4, rather than the 6/8 of other Mexican sones. *La Bamba* is a very old and traditional son from Veracruz and was well known there and then in México long before Richie Valens made his famous California recording and Luis Valdez decided to make a film on Valens' life and name it *La Bamba*.

Today such popular Mexican-American groups as Los Lobos from the Los Angeles area regularly mix traditional regional sones, like those from the Jarochos region, into their very contemporary presentation. In doing so, they have expanded the taste of young Chicano audiences and made them aware of the depth and power of the older forms.

### ***Musical Examples***

6. La Bamba. Lino Chavez
7. Richie Valens: La Bamba. 1958

### **The Brass Bands of Northern México**

There is a traditional form of music centered in the region around the state of Sinaloa in northwestern México that consists of simple songs performed by a brass ensemble of trumpets, clarinets, baritone horns, trombones, tubas, and drums. While in other regions of the world, including other parts of México, this kind of ensemble would be expected to play military marches, in the Sinaloa area it plays from a repertoire of old traditional songs, many associated with the 1910 Mexican Revolution, that are at once folk song and popular love song. In recent years, the sound of the *tambora* as the ensemble is known, has become increasingly popular and has begun to replace the mariachi as the most popular traditional ensemble for general entertainment.

### ***Musical Examples: La Tambora de Sinaloa***

8. El Novillo Despuntado
9. Por Una Mujer Casada

### Marimba Music of México and Central America

The *marimba* is an instrument that traditionally was played only in the southeastern region of México—in the states of Oaxaca, Tabasco, and Chiapas—and on into Guatemala, Eastern Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Over the years, the marimba has functioned as a musical and cultural link between all these countries in Central America and México.

This instrument is a xylophone with wooden keys, which are struck by a pair of mallets in the player's hands. Often, a single large marimba covers several octaves and is played by three or even four men. Sometimes two large marimbas are paired in an ensemble and played by a group of seven musicians. The deep resonating, throbbing, and buzzing sound of the marimba playing the local *sones* has come to be associated with the southern region of México and with Central America.

Given its Latin American association, it is interesting that this instrument is actually African in origin, having been brought by Africans who probably served as part of the labor force in the Pacific and Gulf Coast regions of Central America. In the older simple marimbas, still played by the indigenous peoples of the highlands of Guatemala and among the indigenous peoples of Nicaragua, the instrument has a strip of rattan around one side that serves as both a handle and a brace on which the player can sit while playing the instrument. Each key is suspended over an individual resonator, traditionally made of a dried hollow calabash or squash shell in which a small hole has been cut. This hole is covered with a thin membrane that vibrates when the key is struck. These two elements, the rattan strip and the vibrating membrane, along with the name marimba all point to the instrument's African origin. Although in its more popular version the instrument's rattan carrying strip is no longer used, the vibrating membrane and the name marimba retain that early link.

The marimba apparently was taken up by the Indians, who learned about it and its techniques from the enslaved Africans with whom they were forced to serve as a common labor force. The instrument was used in connection with the Indians' religious rituals, practices that purported to be Christian but retained strong pre-Hispanic elements. From this ritual use of the marimba, the Indians began to adapt its music for village fiestas. Gradually a new mestizo or lowland style of music evolved.

The sound of the marimba is considered in the traditional culture of southern México and Central America to be something of great importance; it is a sound that forms a cultural link between these otherwise quite separate nations. The haunting sounding of the vibrating membranes of the marimba resonators and the frequently used tremolo of the keys has inspired the phrase, *maderas que cantan con voz de mujer*, "wood that sings with the voice of a woman."

During the 1930s and 1940s a group of musicians from Guatemala, the Hurtado Brothers, carried the sound of the marimba to large audiences in the United States, where the Hurtados eventually took up residence. Their performances became a

rallying point for the southern Mexicans and Central Americans living in the United States.

Each of the regions of Central America and of southern México evolved its own repertoire of traditional songs, with the strongest traditions being in the Tehuantepec region of Oaxaca in México, the highlands of Guatemala, and the Masaya region of Nicaragua. The Tehuantepec region of México is a tropical lowland close to the Pacific Ocean. Here, the sones played on the marimba were traditionally used in many aspects of social life. Although their primary function was to provide dance music for the enjoyment and entertainment of those attending festivals, certain occasions called for specific sones. Some were played in connection with weddings; some for ceremonies and festivities held one or two days before the wedding and others for ceremonies one or two days afterward.

One of the most famous marimba sones from México is from the Tehuantepec region. This song, called *La Sandunga*, is also derived from the old Spanish fandango. Although the Sandunga is known all over México as a slow romantic folk ballad, traditionally in Tehuantepec it was a semi-rapid dance in which ornate variations on the melody were alternated with fanfare-like *zapateados*, rapid steps performed by the clicking of the toe and heel against the dance floor.

### ***Musical Example***

10. Tehuantepec Marimba: La Sandunga with zapateados

In the Masaya region of Nicaragua the marimba still retains the rattan carrying strip. The resonators under each key, however, are carved of wood but made to resemble the original gourds. The instrument is played by a single player accompanied by two guitars. The traditional pieces of this region, although not actually called sones as they are in México and Guatemala, resemble them very much in their use of 6/8 rhythm with alternating rhythmic patterns of two groups of three beats contrasted by three groups of two beats.

### ***Musical Examples***

11. Nicaragua: Masaya; El Jarabe Chinchón. Hnos. Pérez
12. Belize, San Jose Succotz, Vaquería. Alma Beliceña
13. Chichicastenango, Guatemala. Música de las cofradías
14. Chiapas: El Niño Dormido

### **Música Norteña, or the Texas-Mexican Border Style**

In the southern area of Texas in the valley of the Rio Grande, a unique kind of music evolved that most Mexicans in México associate with the northern territory of the country and those in the United States associate with Chicanos and their struggles. South Texas is an area of the United States in which the Mexican population has never been a minority and consequently the basic Mexican culture has remained strong, as have regular cultural ties with México.

This music—called *música norteña*—is rooted in part in México. Its style draws from the traditional and popular music of the original inhabitants of Texas (before it was annexed from México), from later Mexican musical styles brought to the area from México, and from the German and Bohemian polka bands scattered around south Texas. From all these elements came a new style—one with clear polka threads mixed with the Mexican ballad, or *corrido*, and more recently popular Mexican forms like the *huapango*. The *huapango* is a unique form of son from the inland area of Veracruz, one whose singing style has strong Indian elements.

The ensemble for this type of music became generally standardized to include the *bandoneón*, a Spanish accordion fitted entirely with buttons instead of a piano keyboard like the German accordion; the *bajo sexto*, a twelve-string guitar; and other guitars that would provide rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment and a bass line. This lively ensemble has become the mainstay of Mexican dances from Michigan to Texas and from Washington state to Louisiana.

*Música Norteña* came to include all these elements fused into a style that expressed the aspirations and hardships of all Mexican-Americans in the United States. Although it was originally a south Texas phenomenon, it was later adopted by the migrant farm workers and disseminated all over the United States. As Mexicans became more aware of the conditions of Chicanos living in the United States, this music came to be known on both sides of the border as both symbol and expression of this population. In recent years two of the outstanding originators of the Texas-Mexican tradition—singer Lydia Mendoza and accordionist Narcisco Martinez—were honored with a National Heritage Award by the National Endowment for the Arts.

#### ***Musical Examples***

15. Flaco Jimenez: La Nopalera. Accordion w/guitar and bass 1938
16. Los Pinguinos del Norte: El Gallito Huapango. 1970

## Spanish Music of New México

In the mountains of northern New México and southern Colorado lives a group of people whose history goes back to the time when the region was part of New Spain and México was not yet independent of Spain. For many years they were isolated from the larger urban culture of the United States and from regular contact with new cultural developments in México. Perhaps as a result, they preserved strong vestiges of a tradition that goes back to a time when only a few Anglo-Americans had ventured west.

The Spanish music of New México draws from a common repertoire of song and dance types that were popular in many regions of the Western world during the nineteenth century: waltzes, schottisches, and mazurkas. However, the version of these dances played in southern Colorado and northern New México came filtered through the contemporary polite urban culture of México, which itself was strongly influenced by what was popular in Spain at that time.

## Hispanic Musical Traditions of the Caribbean

### Puerto Rico

#### *The Highland Culture*

The jíbaro of the highlands of Puerto Rico preserves a rich musical heritage, one that is uniquely Puerto Rican but reflects the island's Spanish cultural roots. The Spaniards who settled in Puerto Rico, like those who went to Cuba, came mostly from southern Andalucía and brought with them strong elements of that region's culture. The jíbaro music is played by small ensembles consisting mostly of *cuatros* and guitars. The cuatro is a small double-course guitar with pairs of strings that are tuned in unison or octaves, are strung closely together, and are plucked as a single string. To this ensemble of guitar-type instruments are added a *güiro*—a wooden instrument shaped like a dried gourd (which may have been its predecessor) onto which a number of grooves have been cut and over which a small metal comb is scraped to produce a rhythmic rasping sound. Recently it has become popular to add to jíbaros the sound of bongo drums and often a clarinet or trumpet. But even in the purer setting of cuatros, guitars, and güiro, the influence of Afro-Caribbean rhythm is unmistakable.

The repertoire of the jíbaros of Puerto Rico also shows clear Andalusian origins. All the music is vocal and the frequent use of improvised eight-syllable couplets of ten lines each, called *décimas*, links the Puerto Rican tradition to sixteenth-century Spanish poetic practice. Two of the most frequently encountered forms are the aguinaldo and the seis. The aguinaldo, or Christmas offering, is based on an old form of Spanish Christmas carol.

The seis, which literally means "six," is in fact a great number of different tune types or melodic motifs, each of which can be used as the basis for sung poetic improvisation. The individual seis have no titles but are identified by the name of the type they represent, and when performed in Puerto Rico, most are named after a particular town on the island. Thus we have the *Seis Bayamones*, named for the town of Bayamón, the *Seis del Dorado*, named for El Dorado, the *Seis Fajardeño* for Fajardo, etc. The naming of these seis after towns parallels the practice in Spain of naming different types of fandango after the particular town or region of Andalucía where the variant form was developed. In point of fact many of these seis were originally fandangos.

Some seis are named according to the manner of dance that complements them, such as the *seis chorreao* (like flowing water), *seis enojao* (angry), or *seis zapateao* (danced with rapid heel and toe action). In the case of the *Seis de Controversia*, the form is a contest between two singers who alternately improvise décimas, each embroidering and responding to the previous singer's lines. Some seis are named after the musicians who popularized them such as the *Seis de Andino* and the *Seis Villarán*. Thus two performances of the same type of seis will be different because the text of the singer will be different.

The aguinaldo, along with another old Spanish form, the *villancico*, are terms that came to be associated with traditional Christmas celebrations. The term villancico refers to an old Spanish song form and the word aguinaldo refers to a gift of the type that might be made at Christmas. Eventually in Puerto Rico, the term aguinaldo came to dominate as a Christmas carol. There exists in Puerto Rico a rich body of these Christmas tunes, many of which are also known in other parts of Latin America. Aguinaldos are in either major or minor tonalities and are played and sung accompanied by the same ensemble that performs the seis, although the aguinaldos, since they are considered religious, are not regularly used for dancing.

During the Christmas season a *parranda*, a group of family, friends, and neighbors, takes out instruments and sings and plays these Christmas carols, going from house to house in an area, usually being invited in for food and drink at each house, and perhaps ending with a feast of succulent roast pig. Gradually, these aguinaldos came to be used as vehicles for the improvisation of décimas and have come to be used almost interchangeably with the seis.

Among the famous names in Puerto Rican mountain music are Ramito, La Calandria, Chuito, el de Bayamón. New groups appear and many excellent ones have begun to record in the U.S. for select Puerto Rican audiences.

### **Musical Examples**

17. Aguinaldo: De las Montañas Venimos. Cuatro, tres, bongo, guiro
18. Seis: De tan alto a tan bajo. Ramito con Tonito Ferrer y sus Jíbaros Modernos

### **Afro-Puerto Rican Music**

Two important forms from the coastal areas of Puerto Rico where African influence is

notably strong are the plena and the bomba. While the African basis of the forms is clear, distinct Spanish elements can be noted as well and can be described as a mixture of European and African musical practices.

The plena is traditionally associated with the region around the city of Ponce in the southwestern portion of the island, although there are also plenas from other areas, notably around San Juan. In its purer form the plena was performed by a group of singers who accompanied themselves on large Spanish tambourines, called *panderos* or *panderetas*. However, the plena is also performed on numerous combinations of guitars, guiros, and accordions and Afro-Caribbean percussion, bongos, timbas, and *cencerros*. The playing of the pandero in Spain is itself an African borrowing. The instrument originated in the Moroccan tambourine, the *bendir*, which was introduced into Spain some time during the 700 years or so when the Moors were in control of large portions of southern Spain.

The text of the plenas concerns any current or local matter. The lead singer, traditionally called the *inspirador*, begins the song and then the chorus responds. The plena makes use of a characteristic rhythm that emphasizes beats one and three and is organized into a pattern that suggests it may have grown into a relationship with or have been corrupted by the merengue of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. One of the most famous names associated with the plena in Puerto Rico is Canario (Manuel Jimenez). Today, the rhythm of the plena has been adapted to the music of the bands that play in the larger cities of Puerto Rico, and compositions in the plena rhythm are arranged in a style similar to that used for other forms of Afro-Caribbean music.

### **Musical Examples**

19. Traditional Plena: La plena nació en Cidra
20. Modern Plena: Se Escapó un León. Cortijo y su Bonche

The bomba is also an Afro-Puerto Rican form, this one associated with the northern area of the island around the city of San Juan. One of the strongholds of the original bomba is the village of Loiza Aldea near San José. The bomba seems to have fewer clear Spanish elements in it than the plena and would seem to be the outcome of cultural expression of a people who knew the African rhythmic tradition but who now had to use Spanish as a common language. The original performers of this form were among those Africans brought to Puerto Rico to work the sugar cane. The ensemble consists of drums, sticks that are beaten on the sides of the drums, and maracas. The pattern, as well as the drums used traditionally to perform it, are known as bomba. Some players also beat on the side of the drums with small sticks to create a secondary pattern, and maracas—or rattles—are also employed. Originally performed by singers to the accompaniment of these drums and maracas, the bomba, like the plena, has gradually become adapted to the popular dance style of Puerto Rico and its rhythm serves as the basis for new compositions.

The musical style known as salsa has clear and strong Cuban roots, which, however, its avid fans might not be aware of at all. Whenever a plena or bomba is played at a salsa dance, it is generally recognized as being a distinctly Puerto Rican rhythm.

Afro-Puerto Rican music today is difficult to separate from the more international salsa style. Among the more well-known recording artists are Cortijo, Ismael Rivera, El Gran Combo, Eddie Palmieri, and Charlie Palmieri.

### ***Musical Examples***

21. Bomba Adios mis ojitos. Drums, sticks and maracas. Musicians and singers from Loisa Aldea, Puerto Rico
22. Modern Bomba: Jala jala. Ismael Rivera y sus Cachimbos.

## **Cuba**

### ***Guajiro Music***

In the highlands that run through the central section of Cuba live mountaineer peasants known as *guajiros*. In these rural areas of Cuba it is the *guajiros* who have retained the purest elements of the old Spanish traditions. Here, as in Puerto Rico and the Veracruz area of México, the old Spanish tradition of the improvisation of *décimas* has been kept alive. Two musical settings of these old Spanish forms are known among the *guajiros*. The *décima* is a set of couplets of ten syllables each sung in free rhythm while the *punto* is a sung improvisation in a fixed rhythmic pattern accompanied by guitars.

### ***Musical Example***

23. Punto: Cuba. El Indio Nabori

### ***The Danza***

While Cuban villagers and farmers in the highlands retained the old Spanish-flavored forms like the *punto* and *décima*, Cuban city dwellers gradually developed their own polite society and, while also drawing on Spanish roots, reacted to the new forms appearing in Spain and in other Spanish colonies. During the nineteenth century from within the musical ambiance in Europe, which included the waltz, polka, mazurka, and schottische, Cuban polite society, like its counterpart in Puerto Rico, evolved its own particular dance form, the *danza*. Drawn from an older popular Spanish dance called the *contradanza*, the Cuban and Puerto Rican *danza* was a polite social dance rhythm with the unmistakable tinge of something new, in fact something African. In this way the Cuban-Spanish *danza*—like ragtime in the United States, particularly in the refined notated piano version that many came to know—was a musical step toward recognizing the growing African culture that was making itself felt all over this country.

From the *danza* came a new popular social dance, the *danzón*. This dance was popular from the end of the nineteenth century and into the 1930s, when it was gradually replaced by newer Afro-Cuban forms. For many years it was the formal social dance music of the upper classes in Cuba. Based on the rhythm of the *danza*, but with more pronounced African elements incorporated, the music was played by a small salon orchestra of mixed strings and winds with the addition of a pair of timpani, or

kettledrums, without pedals. The danzón soon caught on all over Latin America. Aaron Copland's famous composition, *El Salón México*, is based on the danzón and on Copland's recollection of attending a dance hall in México City during the 1920s at which everyone was dancing the Cuban danzón.

It is impossible to say whether these forms represented a conscious taming of the African elements encountered or were simply the extreme limits to which the current tradition could be taken away from the European. Most likely both theories are correct and the evolution of the danza simply represented a natural process of acculturation. What is significant is that in Cuba this new step, occurring probably about the same time that the African drum ensembles in Cuba were beginning to adapt Spanish melodic types and singing patterns into their music, was the beginning of a process that gave rise to many of the most popular dance forms in Latin America and the world.

### ***Afro-Cuban Forms***

It is in the creation of a body of new forms, based on Spanish song types and African rhythms, that the uniqueness of Cuban music lies. One of the fundamental rhythmic patterns of that music is the rumba. One of earliest known manifestations of the rumba pattern occurred when Afro-Cubans played drum patterns on wooden boxes. Eventually the guitar and a few other instruments were added, and the dance form known as the rumba came into being.

Small street bands called *comparsas* consisted of a group of musicians singing in Spanish and playing on drums of the conga type as they walked or marched or danced through the streets of cities like Havana. From these street bands grew an entire range of Cuban bands that mixed elements of Spanish melody and harmony with African rhythmic patterns, which in turn began to influence the development of Cuban melody and harmony. The *comparsas'* repertoire consisted primarily of two song/dance types. The first was *guaguanco*, which blended with the rumba to become one the most important and most influential dance types of Cuban music, known as the *rumba-guaguanco* or usually just as rumba. The second form was a kind of marching or processional music called the conga, which became an important dance type of its own.

### ***Musical Example***

24. Guaguanco with Comparsa: Agua que va caer. Patato and Totico with Arsenio Rodriguez

Of the hundreds of different types of Cuban dance ensemble, only a few can be described and only rather broadly. Probably the guitar was the first European instrument to be grafted onto the Afro-Cuban drum ensembles after these were established in the *comparsas* and rumba ensembles. The addition of the guitar strengthened the European harmony and melodic line, without weakening the African rhythmic elements. The guitar also allowed the blending in of call and response singing patterns and melodic type that were African in origin as well.

One of the significant ensembles of Cuban music, and one that had a very important

role in the popularization and dissemination of the Cuban music known as salsa, was the small *conjunto*, a combination of one or more guitars and voices to which are added maracas, bongos, and perhaps a trumpet. From evidence in recordings we note that a great number of these trios and conjuntos were playing in the 1920s and are still playing in Cuba today.

***Musical Example: Cuba. Small Conjunto***

25. Son: Voy Pa' Mayarí. Compay Segundo

The trumpet in Cuban music was often added to the singing street bands, the *comparsas*, particularly in the playing of *congas*. The trumpet in Cuban music adds a distinctive element, one that is paralleled only by the use of the trumpet in the *mariachi* music of México. From the *comparsa* band the trumpet went on to be used frequently in trios and small conjuntos. In addition, a new kind of dance band evolved. This was the *sonora*, best exemplified by one particular group, the *Sonora Matancera*, which formed in the 1920s in Cuba and went on to become one of the best-known Cuban bands in all of Latin America. Extensively recorded and widely imitated outside Cuba as well, this sound of Cuban percussion, with guitar, piano, and two trumpets contributed substantially to the development of salsa in the 1960s and 1970s and was the inspiration for Willie Colon's later group using two trombones.

During the 1940s and 1950s a new kind of Cuban music, the mambo, was made famous by Pérez Prado. The music was played by a band that resembled a full American (U.S.) dance or jazz band with saxophone, trumpet, and trombone sections, to that had been added a Cuban percussion section. This music inspired a new dance form all over the world, but had a particular impact on American (U.S.) jazz during the 1940s and 1950s. After that, Cuba evolved a new kind of dance orchestra, one that came out of the *danzónera*, the little orchestra used to play *danzones*. This orchestra was the *charanga*, an ensemble of Cuban percussion with piano, a quartet of violins, and a flute. The new dance forms that accompanied it were the *pachanga* and the *cha-cha-chá*.

After the blockade of Cuba in 1958, no new forms came out of the country because musicians could not travel freely, but also because changes were going on within Cuba that altered the context in which this music had originated. Before long the hunger for Latin music led to a rediscovery of Brazil and bossa nova, while in other parts of Latin America forms like the *cumbia* from Colombia and the *merengue* from the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Puerto Rico began to fill in some of the void left by the absence of Cuba as a major musical force. Slowly however, the force and impact of Cuban music were reawakened. Kept alive mostly by Cuban musicians living in New York, who were joined by musicians from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and eventually all Latin America and even the United States, the Cuban music tradition lives on in the form of salsa and continues to be the most significant single influence on all the music of Latin America.

The list of Cuban musicians one could pursue is long, although today most of the recordings are difficult to find. Some of the names to look for are Celia Cruz, The *Sonora Matancera*, El Septeto Nacional, Trio Matamoros, Los Guaracheros De Oriente,

Guillermo Portabales, Acerina y su Danzonera, Compay Segundo, and—among the newer groups from Cuba—Irakere.

## The Music of Brazil

As in other Latin American cultures the European traditions are noted in their strongest and most undiluted form in two cultural strata, folk music and the oldest surviving forms of urban popular music. In Brazil both these types exist. In the Sertao region of the Northeast, there is an old Portuguese-rooted form of improvised competitions known as *cantoria o desafio*, which parallels the jíbaro music of Puerto Rico and the guajira music of Cuba. Scattered throughout the vast expanses of Brazil are isolated towns and villages settled by people who brought with them folk dances and songs from Portugal. Of the many forms of this type of music that survive, the strongest are to be found in the northeastern inland region of Brazil, the home of the Brazilian cowboy or *cagnaceiro*. This is a lively folk music in style, which uses the rustic sounds of the *sanfona*, the Brazilian accordion, the guitar, and the tambourine. In sound and style the country music of this region bears an odd resemblance to the música norteña of the Texas Mexican border.

### **Musical Example: Brazilian Country Music**

26. Rio Grande do Sul: Sofrimento; Asrasta-pe

At the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth, the popular music of the larger urban centers like Rio de Janeiro used forms that were strongly Portuguese in flavor yet had borrowed from other Latin American forms. The romantic *modinha* is an example of a type of lyrical love song that is closely related to the *milonga* of Argentina. Both forms, like many others, may have derived from the Cuban habanera or tango. There was other music, too, like the *lundu*, which formalized the African rhythms that were being heard all over Brazil, particularly in the large coastal cities. While the older Portuguese-influenced forms of the Brazilian countryside remained relatively pure, the urban popular forms changed quickly and the newer forms increasingly showed greater degrees of Afro-Brazilian influence.

### **Musical Example: Old Brazilian Popular Music**

27. Modinha: Maringa. Clara Petraglia

As in Cuba and Haiti, the influence of the enslaved Africans from the Nigerian Yoruba groups soon became well organized and found a means of coexisting with Catholicism. In Brazil these religious groups were known as *candomble* and *macumba*. These traditions continue to be very strong in Brazil, and in terms of the contemporary culture the survival of this strongly African-influenced musical tradition has permitted an easily accessible contact point with the roots of the Afro-Brazilian culture.

Since around 1910 the popular music of Brazil has had an important influence on international popular music. The first Brazilian dance form to gain broad international acceptance was the samba. Originating as a dance of the Black communities of the larger cities like Rio, the samba came to be associated with troupes of dancers, or

"schools of samba," as they were called. In fact, more like associations or societies, these groups of neighborhood people spent hours together practicing new dance steps and rhythms and making costumes for each year's competition during *carnaval*, the popular week-long festival celebrated just before the beginning of Lent. The parade of elaborate costumes, combined with intricate dance steps and new songs, makes the competition during carnival intense and exciting. The famous Mardi Gras in New Orleans is in this tradition.

### **Musical Example**

28. Escola de Samba: Mangueira

These sambas caught on with the Brazilian public and soon an entire genre of popular music emerged that used the samba rhythm but had lost almost all connection with the religious festival that had inspired the original dance form. As the samba grew in popularity in Brazil, it also drew attention and interest in the United States and Europe. During the 1930s the samba hit a wave of popularity in the United States heightened by the appearance of popular Brazilian singer Carmen Miranda. For several decades the samba became the mainstay of Brazilian popular music and in the early 1960s was a strong influence in the development of the new Brazilian popular music form known as bossa nova. The entire history of popular music in Brazil presents an interesting parallel to that of the United States. While most often reflecting a strong element of what we can generally think of as the samba rhythm, Brazilian popular music regularly changed melodic and harmonic styles in response to changing popular taste. While changing taste in popular music is something to be noted everywhere, the waves and dips of popularity in Brazil most closely resemble those in the United States.

### **Musical Example: Brazilian Street Band**

29. Choro: Assim Mesmo (Luis Americano). Jacob do Bandolim

Bossa nova, in particular, had a long and lasting influence on American (U.S.) popular music. Originating during the 1960s as a softer form of the samba with modern harmony and melodic phrasing influenced by American (U.S.) "cool" jazz, the music also reflected a strong political message of protest. Frequently many of the best and most famous Brazilian singers had to leave the country or find their records banned by the government. During the 1960s American (U.S.) jazz musicians like Miles Davis, Charlie Byrd, and Stan Getz became interested in bossa nova and helped to introduce this new form into the United States. Stan Getz, in particular, with his recording of Antonio Carlos Jobim's *Girl From Ipanema* with Joao and Astrud Gilberto started a wave of popularity in the United States that lasted almost twenty years. As its popularity waned in the U.S., it gradually settled into a niche in which the bossa nova rhythm was used as the standard kind of background for the slow-tempo love song. This trend lasted until rock completely took over the popular music world by the early 1970s.

While the popularity of bossa nova in the United States came and went, the music continued to win favor in Brazil, went through several phases, and was expressed in the performances and compositions of a great many musicians, some of whom could not really be thought of as performing in the bossa nova style. The term itself began to

wane in Brazil but the creative force of the new music went on in the music of such composers and performers as Antonio Carlos Jobim, Elis Regina, Baden Powell, Nara Leao, Jair Rodrigues, Chico Buarque, George Ben, and Gilberto Gil.

***Musical Example: Post Bossa Nova***

30. Elis: Briga nunca mas—(Antonio Carlos Jobim)

### Music of the Andean Regions

The Andean melodic type has a unique sound, one that listeners from outside the region often regard as haunting. This perception may help to account for the music's recent popularity in Europe, Japan, and the United States.

**Musical Example: Perú, Quechua Indians**

31. Cuzco Quechua: Inti-Raymi. Festival of the Sun. Children's voices with conch shells.

Two pre-Hispanic forms were important and continue to be used. These were the *yaravi* and the *huayno*. *Yaravi* is usually translated as "lament." It is at once an elegy and a love song, sung or played in a slow pattern of irregular beats with the haunting tune characteristic of the Andean region. This Andean melodic type is strongly pentatonic, yet gives the illusion of alternately shifting from the minor to the relative major. Later, after the addition of Spanish influence in Andean music, this major-minor shifting became delineated and emphasized by the addition of Western harmony, which formalized the major-minor pattern.

It may be that the *yaravi* was older than the Inca empire. During the time of the Incas and before the arrival of the Spanish, it is said that in special performances the Inca himself would sing a *yaravi* for his people. A llama would be tied to a stake in the center of the arena. The llama would begin bleating and the Inca himself would approach and, to the rhythm of the bleating of the llama, would sing his *yaravi*. The *yaravi* continues to be a very important expression of deep feeling in the Andes, and its sound inspires a strong feeling of nostalgia and regret over the loss of past glories.

One of the important and unique instrumental types used by the Andean peoples is the panpipe. Called *sikuri* in Quechua and *antara* in Aymara, this instrument is a set of tubes of cane, grafted together. These instruments were usually played in interlocking pairs, with one player playing some of the notes and the other player filling in with the others in a relationship in which neither part dominated and both were interdependent. In early depictions of panpipe players—on Peruvian ceramics, for example—we see them dancing and playing but with a string running from one instrument to the other, emphasizing the interdependence of the instruments as well as the players. Retaining the interlocking principle, the panpipes were often played in large ensembles as well, often with very large panpipes and with the addition of drums.

**Musical Example: Andean Pan Pipes**

32. Chukarubaile. Santiago, Potosí, Bolivia

The lively *huayno* and the melancholy *yaravi* epitomize the melodic type current in the Andes. Variants of this music and of the panpipe bands that play it can be found in Perú, Northern Chile, Ecuador, and even the Orinoco Valley of Venezuela. In each region of the Andes there are variant forms of melody and unique forms and combinations of instruments. These original forms survive in many regions of the Andes

and in others came to be combined with instruments introduced by the Spanish, eventually giving rise to the pan-Andean type of music so often heard today. Still, the yaravi and huayno are often heard. In the instrumental performances, the doleful yaravi would often have a short *cacharpari*, a lively tune in quick tempo, added to it as a kind of send-off or coda. The lively *cacharpari* lends the performance a humorous note, a positive contrast to the sorrow or self-pity of the yaravi.

### The Spanish Influence

The Spanish did in the Andes what they did in México and Paraguay, where they also encountered large indigenous populations. They set up special schools to stamp out the original inhabitants' religious beliefs and to teach Western culture, including Spanish music. As in these other regions, the Spanish schools taught the playing and making of the violin, guitar, and harp. The harp and guitar caught hold with the Indians and were absorbed into the Andean musical style, playing and expanding upon the same repertoire of the *quena* and panpipes.

The playing technique of the guitar is standard, a contrasting of *punteado* or plucking with *rasqueado*, or strumming, called *punteo* in México and Cuba. In spite of this standard Latin American guitar technique, the sound of the Andean melodic type gives the music a distinctive character. However, it is in the playing of the harp that we find something new. The standard harp technique has the left hand playing an arpeggiated bass line against a melodic line in the right hand. This is the technique taught by the Spanish that forms the basis of almost all harp playing in Latin America, from the Yaqui Indians of Sonora to the harpists of Paraguay. In the Andean region, by contrast, the right hand of the harpist plays the melody in plucked and tremolo style in imitation of the *quena* or panpipes while the left hand plays in a broken pattern in imitation of the Andean drums. The use of a new technique grafted onto instruments introduced from the West is yet another indication of the strength of indigenous traditions, even in the face of the determined power of the Spanish conquest.

#### **Musical Examples: Andean Mountain Music**

33. Yaravi. Perú, Cuzco Dept. Two *quenas*, violin, harp, and *cajita* (tube of bamboo struck with two sticks). Ends with *Cacharpari*
34. Cuzco, Perú: El Balicha. Female voice, *quenas*, violins, harp, and drums

### A Thriving Tradition

Throughout the Andean region, from northern Chile to Ecuador, the Andean musical traditions continue to thrive. During the 1970s, beginning with a new interest that began largely in France, Andean music experienced a revival. Numerous groups (the largest number by far including no Andeans) began making recordings and giving concerts. Groups like the American Sukay quickly spawned an array of imitators, and Peruvian panpipe ensembles soon could be heard everywhere. One very positive fallout of this interest is that in addition to the revivalist groups, one can find an authentic band of Peruvian Indians playing in a night club in Berlin or a group of Ecuadorian Indians

playing for passersby on the Mall near the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C.

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## MUSICAL EXAMPLES

### México—Indigenous Music

1. Lacandón. Song to Appease the Tiger
2. Pascola Dance. Yoh' Hopoli (Mother Night Bird)
3. Maso (Deer), Tene Woi Yueria (Cocoon Bug). Water drum and scraper
4. Zinacantán: Harp, violin, guitar w/ singing

### Mexican and Central American Regional Styles

5. Son Mariachi: Las Olas. Los Torcazos Michoacanos
6. La Bamba. Lino Chavez
7. Richie Valens: La Bamba. 1958
8. La Tambora de Sinaloa: El Novillo Despuntado
9. La Tambora de Sinaloa: Por Una Mujer Casada

### Marimba Music from México and Central America

10. Tehuantepec Marimba: La Zandunga with zapateados
11. Nicaragua: Masaya; El Jarabe Chinchón. Hnos. Pérez
12. Belize, Son Jose Soccotz :Vaquería. Marimba Alma Beliceña
13. Chichicastenango, Guatemala. Música de las cofradías
14. Chiapas: El Niño Dormido

### Mexican Music in the United States

15. Flaco Jimenez: La Nopalera. Accordion w/guitar and bass 1938
16. Los Pingüinos del Norte: El Gallito. Huapango. 1970

### Latino Music in the Caribbean: Puerto Rican Mountain Music

17. Aguinaldo: De las Montañas Venimos. Cuatro, tres, bongo, guiro
18. Seis: De tan alto a tan bajo. Ramito con Tonito Ferrer y sus Jíbaros Modernos

**Afro-Puerto Rican Music**

19. Traditional Plena: La plena nació en Cidra
20. Modern Plena: Se escapó un león. Cortijo y su Bonche
21. Traditional Bomba. Adios mis ojitos
22. Bomba: Jala jala. Ismael Rivera y sus Cachimbos

**Cuban Music**

23. Punto : Cuba. El Indio Nabori
24. Guaguanco with Comparsa: Agua que va caer. Patato Totico with Arsenio Rodríguez
25. Son: Voy Pa' Mayarí. Compay Segundo

**Brazilian Music**

26. Rio Grande do Sul: Sofrimento; Asrasta-pe
27. Escola de Samba: Mangueira
28. Modinha: Maringa. Clara Petraglia
29. Choro: Assim Mesmo (Luis Americano). Jacob do Bandolim
30. Elis: Briga nunca mas - (Antonio Carlos Jobim)

**Andean Music**

31. Cuzco, Quechua: Inti-Raymi. Festival of the Sun Children's voices with conch shells
32. Pan Pipe Ensemble. Chukarubaile. Santiago, Potosí, Bolivia
33. Yaravi. Mountain Perú, Cuzco Dept. Two quenás, violin, harp and cajita (tube of bamboo struck with twosticks) ends with Cacharpari
34. Cuzco, Perú: El Balicha. Female voice, quenás, violins, harp and drums

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**PUBLISHERS OF MULTICULTURAL MUSIC-EDUCATION MATERIALS**

Dove Music, Abraham Caceres, P.O. Box 08286. Milwaukee, WI 53208, phone 414/444-4447. One of best sources for videos of Hispanic and African-American popular music, and world music.

House of Musical Traditions, David Eisner, 7040 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912. One of best sources for recordings of Hispanic and African-American popular music.

Music Educators National Conference, 1902 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091. Publishes three important books (with tapes and videos) about multicultural music education.

Original Music, John Storm Roberts, R.D. 1 Box 190, Lasher Road, Nivoli, NY 12583, phone 914/756-2767. One of best sources for recordings of Hispanic and African-American popular music.

World Music Press, Judith Tucker, P.O. Box 2565, Danbury, CT 06813, phone 203/748-1131. One of best sources for world music teaching materials.