



Road Recordings

CARIBEana



Hidden music from the Caribbean
collected from the shores and islands

- Jarana & Harp *from Vera Cruz*
- Lebanese ud *from Port au Prince*
- Huastecan Trio *from Vera Cruz*
- Tiroro's Drums *from Haiti*
- "Calypsoid" Band *from Jamaica*
- Asturian Bagpiper *from Vera Cruz*

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5005

This is a miscellany of music collected in the Caribbean area and the east coast of Mexico. It does not represent related cultures nor is all of the material here presented indigenous to this melting pot area.

The ud player from Lebanon was transient in Port-au-Prince; we have included him simply because he was there and seemed worth recording.

But see what happens to negro music in Jamaica when you hear Cousin Jamie, Redhead and Tomato. Here is the current (1954) Calypso idiom where the Negro has wrought his charm upon the English language.

Tiroro is something else, again. A discussion of his music by composer Henry Cowell appears on #5004. Tiroro may be called a truly native drummer of Haiti as he plays the veritable rhythms of his people.

Harp and Jarana; Huastecan songs.

Like many of their counterparts from the coasts of Veracruz and Guerrero, from Michoacan and Jalisco, these huapangos(1) or sones from the Huasteca region(2), owe most of their musical roots to Spain, as well as the poetic form of many of their texts. However, in this marvelous tropical region whose people are a mixture of Totonac, Tepehua, Naho, Otomi and Huastecan Indians with varying proportions of Spanish and some French settlers, the Spanish outlines have been infused with new colors and shadings to a degree



Our performers here are two workmen who decided to take six months off and wander about Mexico singing and playing for their keep.

that the result is no longer Spanish. The virile rasgueo, stroked rhythms, of the big, warm-toned huapanguera guitar and the little, high-voiced, passionate five-stringed jarana, forming an exciting rhythmic counterpoint to the violin's musical ornamentation and to the tense flight of the falsetti singing. The singing, while probably derived from the high Asturian vocalization - which in its turn is a relic of the Moorish invasion in Spain, is unique probably in the world, having developed characteristics which distinguish it from all other types of vocalization that use a very high male register, and which express to perfection the impassioned phrases of love and the exaltation reached in the height of the marriage and birthday fiestas when the huapangos are sung and danced to.



The bagpipe recorded in Vera Cruz was played by a native of Asturias, Spain who had lived in Mexico for thirty years. Certainly this instrument, the gaeta, is not native to Mexico, but neither was the harp or the jarana or the marimba or guitar.

(1) Probably derived from a combination of nahuatl words meaning roughly "place with wood over it" - i.e. - huapango, Spanish corruption of cuapanco, from cuahuitl - wood, or something made of wood; ipan - on top of, above; and co - suffix meaning place where, location. All this refers to the platform of wood, or tarima, which is erected for the huapango, and on which the people dance.

(2) Cultural rather than strictly geographical region of Mexico which includes parts of five states: Puebla (northeast tip), the north of the state of Veracruz, the eastern part of Hidalgo, most of San Luis Potosi and the southernmost part of Tamaulipas.

The dancers form in two lines facing each other, men on one side and women on the other. There is no physical contact between the sexes. At the end of each huapango, the men and women sit on rough wooden benches on their respective sides of the tarima, or wooden platform. When the next number is going to begin, the men get up first, each one going over in front of the girl he wants to dance with and bids her hand for this dance. During certain parts of the dance, the two lines (men and girls), change sides. At the moment in which the men and women pass each other during this change, there is a brief opportunity to express some endearing phrase or even propose marriage, as there is still very little opportunity in the small remote towns for a lover to talk openly to his beloved, and his best opportunity is often during the gaiety and comparative freedom of a Huapango fiesta. Often the singers start veritable contests of improvisation around the theme of some girl that they both want to marry, these contests often ending in a duel with machetes or pistols, although this sort of emotional outburst is now on the wane.

FIDELITY OF RR

Most RR discs are "high fidelity". All records are identified in the catalog, however, as HF, MF, and LF, for high, medium and low fidelity. MF and LF releases may be the result of field work with a spring-wound machine or 7 1/2"/sec. tape originals or non-condenser-microphone work, for example. However, in each case, the MF and LF discs are released because they carry hard-to-find material which is precious to collectors.