

ASCH MANKIND SERIES



AHM 4212

MUSIC OF GUATEMALA

Recorded and Edited by Jacques Jangoux



MUSIC OF GUATEMALA

Recorded and Edited by
Jacques Jangoux

RETURN TO ARCHIVE
CENTER FOR FOLKLORE PROGRAMS
AND CULTURAL STUDIES
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

SIDE I

SAN JUAN LA LAGUNA

- Band 1 - Chirimia and Drum
- Band 2 - Chirimia and Drum
- Band 3 - Chirimia and Drum

SAN PEDRO LA LAGUNA

- Band 4 - Marimba and Clarinet
- Band 5 - Marimba and Clarinet
- Band 6 - Chirimia and Drum
- Band 7 - Chirimia and Drum

JOCOTAN

- Band 8 - Small Marimba

TODOS SANTOS

- Band 9 - Whistling
- Band 10 - Spanish Children's Song
- Band 11 - Spanish Children's Song
- Band 12 - Spanish Children's Song

SIDE II

TODOS SANTOS

- Band 1 - Humming
- Band 2 - Marimba
- Band 3 - Marimba
- Band 4 - Marimba
- Band 5 - Marimba
- Band 6 - Los Almendras (Ladino)
- Band 7 - Adios Juanita (Ladino)
- Band 8 - Indian Song
- Band 9 - Indian Song

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

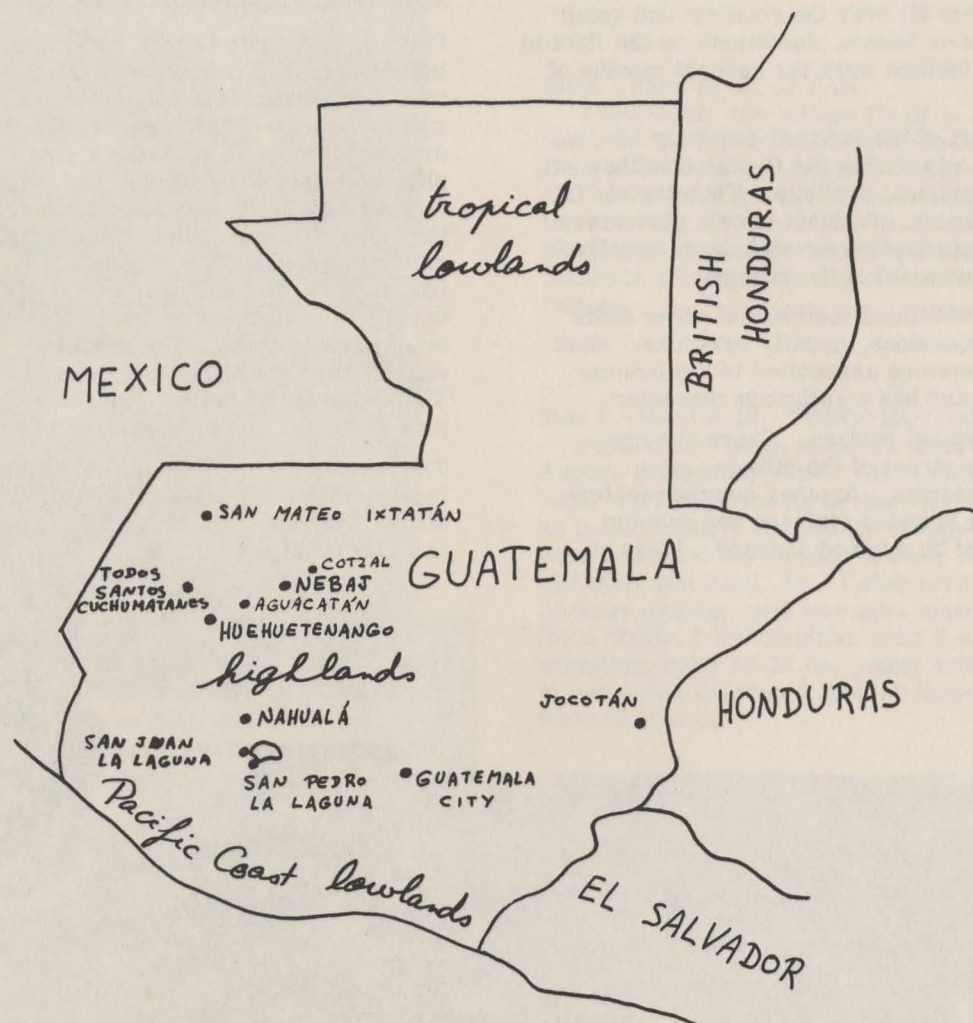
COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUES JANGOUX

©1969 ASCH RECORDS, 701 Seventh Ave. N.Y. 10036 USA

ASCH MANKIND SERIES AHM 4212

MUSIC OF GUATEMALA



MUSIC OF GUATEMALA

Recorded in 1964 by Jacques Jangoux editing, notes,
and photographs by Jacques Jangoux.

The music presented in this album is typical of rural Guatemala. Most of the inhabitants of this area are Indians of Mayan descent, but almost everywhere in the Guatemalan countryside one can also find Ladinos: persons, of whatever descent, who speak Spanish in their homes and have adopted the Ladino way-of-life, which is mostly Spanish. Mostly---because both the cultures of rural Guatemala are the result of the confrontation over several centuries of two very different civilizations, the indigenous Mayan, and the Western, introduced by the Spanish in the 16th century. Both cultures have borrowed traits from the other, and this is nowhere more evident than in their music, which is a mixture of European, Indian, and perhaps also African elements.

Physically Guatemala may be divided into three areas:
1) the tropical Northern Lowlands, where the Mayan civilization reached its peak, but now sparsely inhabited;

2) the temperate Central Highlands, the home of most of the present-day Indians; and 3) the tropical lowlands of the Pacific Coast, the site of intensive banana and coffee cultivation.

The Indians of the highlands live in scattered settlements. The mountainous terrain makes communication difficult and life is usually hard. The men farm, working corn and bean fields on the mountain slopes, corn being the staple in their diet. The women usually remain at home, attending to domestic chores like cooking, spinning cotton, and weaving.

The poor communication has tended to isolate the villages, allowing each to retain its own identity.

Each village has its own patterns of cloth, for example, and often even its own "personality" and psychology. All villagers are usually alike, however, in their shyness and distrust of foreigners---perhaps because all are isolated, perhaps because all have experienced a long period of colonization and oppression.

The isolation of the villagers is broken by two things: going to market, often in other villages or towns, where they meet people from all over the country; and going to work in the coffee or banana plantations on the Pacific Coast, where most Indians work for several months of the year.

While music is a part of the Indians' everyday life, as in worksongs, it is only during the fiestas that they fully express their musical heritage. Then the air is everywhere full of music. At least once a year every village has a big fiesta lasting several days, usually celebrating the patron saint of the village.

There may also be additional festivals at other dates to celebrate other occasions, usually religious. Most of their music is therefore associated in the Indians' mind with religion, and has a religious character.

Festivals follow a typical pattern. There are processions through the street of the village, often accompanied by musicians. Another common feature are "bailes," plays in which dialogue and dancing alternate, performed by masked dancers. Many of

these bailes, as for instance the best known, the "Baile de la Conquista," were written by Spanish missionaries to replace in Catholic religious festivals the dances that the Maya performed during their religious festivals. Every festival is also accompanied by praying and burning of incense in the church, the firing of "cohetes" (fireworks or rockets), and drinking and dancing to marimba music at the cantinas (bars) where aguardiente (sugar cane alcohol) is sold.

Guatemalan music is both vocal and, more often, instrumental. Guatemalans consider the marimba their national instrument. It is a large wooden xylophone with resonators, usually played by three or four musicians, although a small one may be played by only one person. The origin of the marimba is unknown, but it may have come from Africa with the negro slaves. Other popular instruments are the chirimia (photos 1-2), a double reed wind instrument like an oboe; and the pito, a kind of flute. Both are usually accompanied by one or two drums, which can be of various sizes. The dancers in the "bailes" usually have gourd rattles, sometimes replaced (as in Todos Santos) by bells. In a few villages, the Indians manufacture and play violins and guitars.

The selections presented in this album are mostly Indian, with a few Ladino pieces. The Indians are all Maya, and belong to the Tzutuhil, Ixil, Mam, Chuj, and Chorti linguistic groups.

Drum and chirimia from Nahualá or Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán, in San Juan La Laguna.



NOTES ON THE RECORDINGS

SIDE I - Band 1-3: SAN JUAN LAGUNA

Population: Tzutuhil Indians. Date of Recording: June 24, 1964. Circumstances of The Recording: Fiesta de San Juan (June 22-25). Description: Two musicians wearing costumes of Nahualá or Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán (Quiché Indians) are playing Chirimía and drum in front of the church after a procession in which they had also been playing.



Drum, chirimia player (half-hidden) and pito player in a procession in Nebaj.

SIDE I - Band 4-7: SAN PEDRO LA LAGUNA

Population: Tzutuhil Indians. Date of Recording: June 28 & 29, 1964.

Circumstances of The Recording: Fiesta de San Pedro (June 27-30). Description: Band 4 and 5; Music of the "Baile de los Mexicanos" uses a small marimba played by one musician and clarinet. The dancers have rattles; band 6 and 7 chirimia and two drums.

SIDE I Band 8: JOCATAN

Population: the village itself is inhabited mostly by Ladinos; the hamlets are inhabited by Chorti Indians. Date of Recording: July 24, 1964. Circumstances of The Recording: Fiesta de Santiago (July 23-25). Description: Music of the "Baile de los Huastecos" played and danced by Chorti Indians. The small marimba is played by one musician; the dancers have rattles.

Side I - Band 9-12: TODOS SANTOS CUCHUMATANES

Population: Mam Indians. Date of Recording: August-September 1964. Circumstances of The Recordings: I stayed a month in this, living for a week with an Indian family, the family of Esteban Ramirez. I have recorded the singing of their daughter Ana, 18, and their son Juan, 11. I also recorded Indians and Ladinos singing, and marimba musicians rehearsing for a "baile." Description: band 9 Ana Ramirez whistling; band 10-12 her young brother, Juan, sings in somewhat deformed Spanish three songs that he learned at school.



Two men singing in a procession in Nebuj.

SIDE I - Band 10

Yo Quisiera ser vichito
Para entrar por tu ventana
Vicho, vichito mío
Coje ratones por los rincones

SIDE I - Band II

Gatito, gatito, dice tu mamá
Que ya la comida en la mesa está.
Pues dile a Mamita yo no comeré
Pues hay una fiesta ya bailar iré.

SIDE I - Band 12:

In this song most words are not recognizable.
The song is about a beautiful garden flower.

SIDE II - Band I-5: TODOS SANTOS CUCHUMATANES

Population, Rate of Recording, and Circumstances
of The Recording Information given above.

Description: Band I, Ana Ramirez humming while
spinning cotton; band 2-5 Marimba. The musicians
and dancers were rehearsing for the "Fiesta de
Todos los Santos" (All Saint's Day) (October 31-
November 4). The dancers have bells (the metallic
sound heard on the recordings) instead of rattles.
Band 6-7 Songs by two Ladinos of Todos Santos

SIDE II - Band 6: LOS ALMENDRAS

To acuerdas que me decías
Que kjamás me olvidarías
Fue lo primero que hicistes
Luego amor no me tenías

Que galán están las aguas
Que Debajo do las alemndras
Asi se corrieran mis amores
Si no fueran las malas lenguas

SIDE II - Band 7: ADIOS JUANITA

Dimi Juanita, prenda del alma
Si tu cariño me vas a dar
No tengo dicha y no tengo calma
Me duele el alma
Do tanto amarte.

Pero tu sabes que yo te quiero
Y aunque soy pobre, se trabajar
Nunca me faltan mis varios pesos
Que honradamente me se ganar.

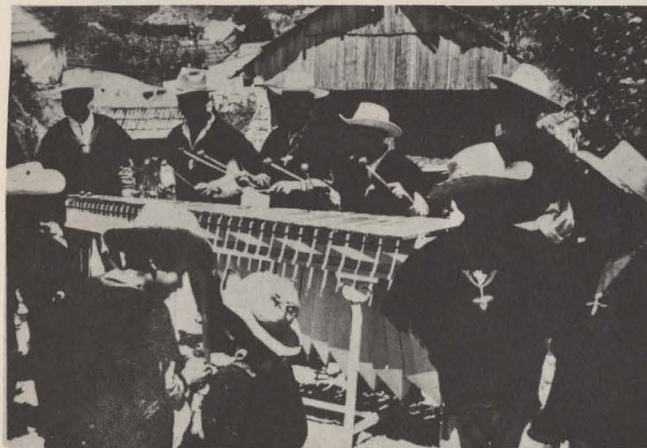
Los gallos cantan, yo me despido
Adiós Juanita, yo ya me voy
Duermas tranquila, sueñas coumigo
Y hace un recuerdo de nuestro amor

SIDE II Band 8-9: SONGS BY TWO INDIANS
OF TODOS SANTOS.

These songs seem to be a parody of Mexican
or Ladino songs. A lot of talking preceeds the
songs, it is by some Ladinos trying to convince
the Indians to sing.

I would like to be a cat
To enter through your window.
Kitty-cat, kitty-cat of mine,
Catches mice in the corners.

Kitty-cat, kitty-cat, your mother says
That the food is on the table
Well tell Mammy that I shall not eat,
Since there is a party and to the
dance I shall go.



Marimbas, San Mateo Ixtatán.

THE ALMOND TREES

Do you remember that you used to tell me
That you would never forget me?
That was the first thing you dis
Then you had no love for me.

How gallant the waters run
Beneath the almond trees
My love would run the same
Were it not for evil talk.

GOODBYE JUANITA

Tell me Juanita, soul of my soul (approx)
If you will give your love to me
I have no good fortune and I have no serenity
My soul aches
From loving you so much.

Yet you know that I love you
And though I'm poor, I know how to work
I never lack the few cents
That I know how to earn honestly.

The cocks crow, I say good-bye
Good-bye Juanita, I go now
Sleep peacefully, dream of me
And remember our love.

Associate Editor, Michael I. Asch