

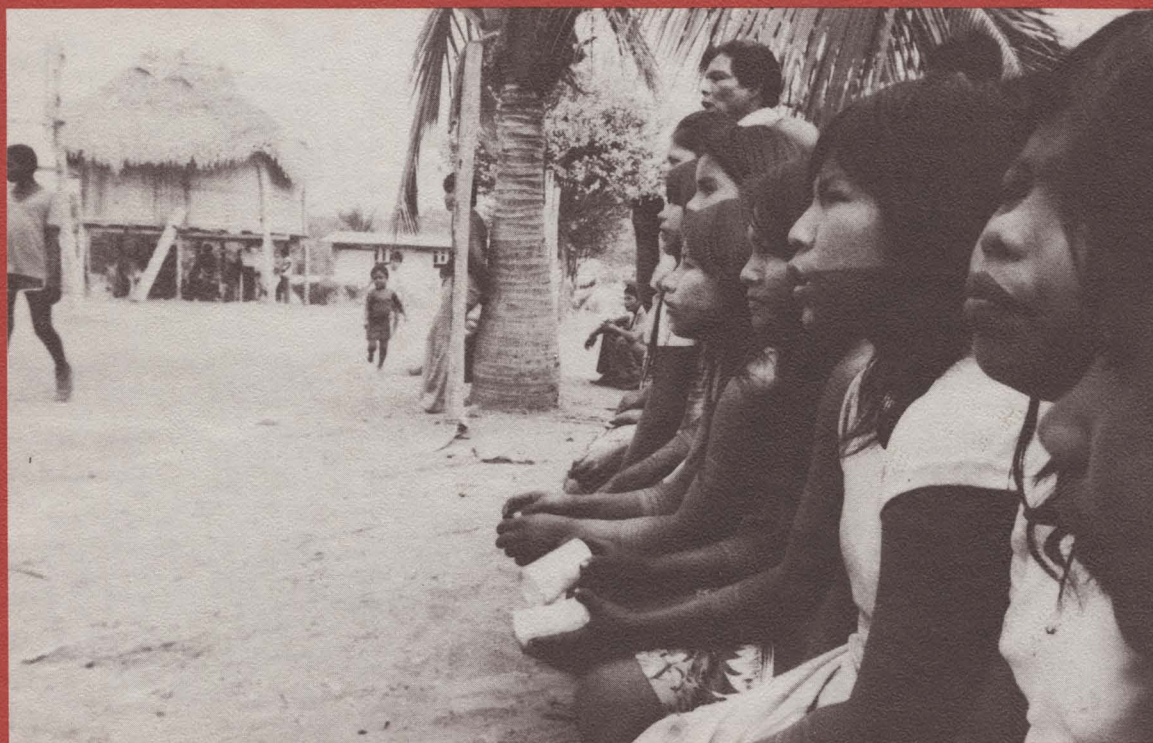
Recorded and Annotated by DAVID BLAIR STIFFLER



ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4326

Music of the Indians of Panama

The Cuna (Tule) and Chocoe (Embera) Tribes



THE CHOCOE



THE CUNA

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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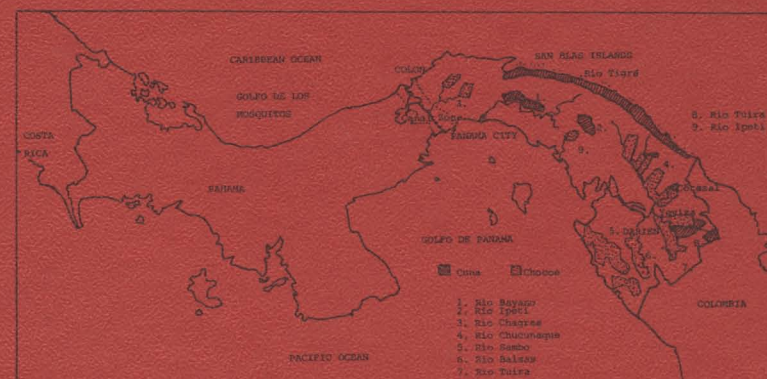
**SIDE 1 Music from the San Blas Islands,
Island of Rio Tigré, Kuna Yala**

- Band 1: Camu Burwi—Flute Music 9:52
Noka Kope Dance Group
Band 2: Cuna Lullaby—Christina Acosta 2:44
(for a baby boy)
Band 3: Cuna Lullaby—Christina Acosta 2:32
Band 4: Aquanusa—Healing Chant 3:01
Wilfredo Morris
Band 5: Camu Suid—Inna Suid 3:20
Incantation for Girls Puberty rite

**SIDE 2 Music of the Chocoe (Embera) of the
Darién Province, Yeviza and Corazal**

- Band 1: Bastica—Flute and Drum Music 1:52
Rio CHico—Corazal
Band 2: Nomina—Flute and Drum composition 3:42
Ilgora Ollea, Choris Cerco
& Demitio Apochito
Band 3: Aru Ruah :46
Band 4: Spirit Invocation—Chocoe Shaman 3:00
or Jaibana (with leaves)
Band 5: Untitled—Demitio Apochito 1:46
Band 6: Untitled—Demitio Apochito 3:30
Band 7: Chocoe Festival Music 7:20
Band of Hector Berrugate

Today there are two groups of aboriginal ethnic groups living in South Eastern Panama below the Canal Zone. They are the Cuna and the Chocoe. In this album a sample of their music and a brief introduction to their culture will be presented.



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THE CUNA

The Cuna or Tule, who call themselves the "Golden People" live principally in the Archipelago of San Blas and at the mouth of the Bayano and Chucunaque rivers in Panama.

The Cuna are probably best known for their colorful "Molas" or panels of reverse appliques, designs of figurative and geometric patterns that have become well known in decorative circles.

Although the Cuna are technically "Panamanian" citizens, they have achieved one of the most positive arrangements of any indigenous people in the world today, by having almost complete sovereignty over their own lands and affairs. As a result, their culture with a few increasing exceptions, remains much as it has for centuries. One factor contributing to this unique condition has been the strict policies of the Indian with reference to their relationship to outsiders.

In the past it was sure death for a white person to remain or to be found on the island after sunset. Strangers were required to leave before dark and if a stubborn straggler remained past the zero hour, whatever happened to him was his own fault. Strict rules as well apply to the Cuna themselves, for if a San Blas woman was to become too familiar with an outsider she was supposed to be given the death penalty as well as her offbred child. In this way the islanders sought to maintain purity of their race and culture.

Other factors responsible for these conditions have been the lack of roads from the mainland culture. (The only way to get to the San Blas Islands is by boat or plane.) One argument against completing the Pan American Highway has been one of a strategic nature. (By not permitting the culture of South America easy access by means of roads, the Panama Canal remains protected from a mass invasion of the southern and less stable governments.) Whatever the reason, this has also served to fortify the isolation and control of the islands by the Indians. It is doubtful that the Indians would be able to maintain this posture once a road from Panama City to the south is completed.

Last but not least, a major factor for the retention of the culture is the culture itself. (Each island has its own governing body, congress or tribal council, and to that degree the purity of the culture is determined.)

Political power is vested in the chief or *Sayla* -- elected for life, unless found guilty of some gross misconduct. They are elected by the headmen of the village. Each chief is assisted by two second chiefs and by several sheriff-like officials whose key functions are that of messengers, agents and official greeters of the village. The congress as noted before, plays the central rule in governing, maintaining outlines of behavior, tribal policy and important decisions. Almost a nightly occurrence, the chief presides over the congress, where he chants a sermon containing many references to *Neles* - (tribal heroes) tribal mythology and legendary history which he must know well. This sermon serves an important function in offering guidelines and precepts for proper behavior.

Some of these allegorical references also serve to bring attention to misdemeanors occurring in the village. No names are ever mentioned (the embarrassment of offenders is usually enough to correct the situation.) The chief is not omnipotent for he must abide by the decisions of the council as well. Other village officials are the advisor, the treasurer, and several men who have important functions or positions in the execution and preparation of the tribal ceremonies. Among these is the Shaman who must possess a knowledge of herbal medicine, ritual chants, and mythology. His training follows a sojourn into the forest by which he must fast until he is nominated by the action of a bird lighting on his body for a second.

The Cuna have an eight-tiered universe with the supreme being occupying the upper floor with the kingdom of the underworld on the lower floors. Game and animals are sometimes released from the *Kalus* -- mythical many levelled storehouses located at the tops of mountains, under the sea, and under the layers of the earth. The souls of human beings are addressed and spoken to in both the singular and the plural (it is the abduction of ones soul or *Purba* that causes illness).

Nuchus are carved wooden figures or effigies occupying a position in every Chuna house. They range in size from a few inches to ten feet. They help in curing and are used as mediators between the living and the spirit world. (Cocoa beans are burned as a nutrient for the *Nuchus*.)

Among the Cuna, the men's dress is conservative, wearing pants and a shirt with the occasional necklace made of animal teeth. The women however, in sharp contrast to the men, wear a colorful but simple wraparound skirt made of printed cotton from the waist down to the

ankles, (similar to the sarong) and a short sleeved blouse composed of primarily two hand-sewn panels in front and back called *molas*. The mola is made by laying several layers of brightly colored cloth, one upon the other, and stitching them with bright threads. The layers are then cut away in curious patterns and shapes (revealing the color underneath) and then hemmed.

The original designs were representative of the women's family "totem" or emblem, inspired supposedly by the tracks of sand crabs etched in the beach. Today, however, the women (and men who sometimes sketch the designs for the women to sew) are good copyists and make everything from designs inspired by nature to those inspired by cigarette wrappers. Several *molas* will be worked on simultaneously, the priority dependant upon ones mood or deadline. (Certain pieces are commissioned by outsiders or tourists.) Prices range anywhere from pennies for a battered old rag (still very beautiful) to hundreds of dollars for very intricate pieces. Average prices range from \$5-\$50 for a new piece. (Bartering and bargaining is not unknown to them and deals are often made.)

In addition to wearing colorful *molas*, the women go all out by decorating their bodies with golden nose rings, earrings, beaded wrist and ankle bracelets, composed of many strands of patterned glass beads, golden breast pendants and necklaces made of the teeth of *Jaguars* or wild boars. (At the time of the girl's birth there is actually a ceremony celebrating the act of piercing the girl's ears and nose, after which a string is placed into the wound to keep it open. The ceremony is called *INNA ICO* -- meaning "chicha of the needle" used for opening the girl's nasal septum. The wearing of a nose ring is a sign of family prosperity.)

One custom shared with the mainland "Chocoe" Indians is that of painting the body with "Jaugua", a plant producing a transparent ink that later turns into a dark blue-black color once applied to the skin. In the case of the Cuna it is only a single dark line painted down the center of the nose or a few tiny dots painted between the eyebrows or on the lower forehead. Many women also paint their cheeks, palms and soles red with the dye of the *Achiote* plant.



CUNA
Woman weaving a hammock

The island Cuna live in compact villages composed of regular rows of houses along one or more streets, while the mainland Cuna live in the smaller villages built along river banks. The houses are rectangular with thatched roofs and palm-wood slats or cane walls. Most are built directly on the ground though some at the eastern end of the Cuna territory are raised on piles. For cooking many houses contain a separate and smaller cookhouse or kitchen constructed as an extension of the main house.

In the division of labor, men do the farming (by the slash and burn method) on the mainland in territory communally owned by the village. When the land has been cleared it becomes private and a family can produce such crops as bananas, plantain, corn, rice, yams, sweet manioc, sugarcane and coconuts, which is the main cash crop of the Cuna. Several Colombian boats can be seen filled to the brim with coconuts that they buy from the Indians. The Colombians are not permitted to tie-up their boats after dark on the islands.

The men also do the fishing and hunting. The fishing is done with the use of nets, spears, bows, and pronged arrows and harpoons from ocean going dugout canoes that are equipped with a jib and triangular sail. The hunting, a secondary activity, not practiced by all men, is done for peccaries (wild pig), agoutis, iguanas, birds, squirrels and two species of monkeys, which play an important role in their entrance into heaven in the afterlife, one's merit determined on how many monkeys he has killed and sent to proceed him.

While the oldest male is head of the household (younger men who have married into the family must work for the father-in-law and are subject to his authority). It is the women who own virtually everything (a man cannot trade or sell an article without first seeking permission from his wife. If she says no the article is not sold and there is no argument about it. She may, however, sell any article that she has made herself without needing to consult her husband. It is through the female line that the inheritance is passed on and the birth of a female child is always preferred, for it is by this event that the father is freed from his obligation to serve his father-in-law. He is then permitted to establish his own household.

The Cuna children undergo a thorough tribal indoctrination beginning with birth. Sometimes the Shaman will assist in childbirth. Remaining outside of the special enclosure during the actual birth, the Shaman will sing special chants and will supply medicine to the midwife according to her reports of progress. The "Singing Man" as he is called, will make chanting or groaning noises in order to keep away evil spirits, (Poni) lest they take advantage of the woman's weak condition and enter her frail body during a difficult birth. The male or husband will make as much noise as he can to fool the evil spirits and makes them think that it is he who is ailing.

Light-skinned white Albino children or "Moon Children" (offspring of the moon god and Indian mother) resultant from inbreeding were in the past killed at birth. They, however, are not permitted to intermarry, and many have difficulty in finding brown mates among the members of the tribe. They are looked upon as weak and incapable of full duties of adulthood. Although they are thought to be more intelligent and possess the power of greater night vision and the ability to drive away the demons (a dragon and huge black dog) that devour the sun and moon during the eclipses by shooting arrows in their direction.

Probably the most important of the rituals for girls and certainly the most complex which is held a year or more after puberty, is called the hair cutting ceremony or Inna Suid - (meaning long Chicha). It is a 4 day ceremony during which time the girl is kept in an enclosure and her hair is cropped as a sign that she has reached womanhood. Women usually get married around the age of 14. (The mainland Cuna reportedly do not cut their hair short.)

For this ceremony parents accumulate large quantities of food and the materials for making large jars of Chicha. During this ceremony the girl receives her ceremonial name as well as gifts from well wishers. These will take the place of wedding gifts and must last a long time. The ceremony is composed of several parts, but in significance it is a re-enactment of the girl's birth and certain symbols relate to the time when the girl was conceived, carried into the uterus and finally delivered by a midwife. (Usually into a small canoe filled with water underneath the mother's hammock.) When the flutes are played the girl is "symbolically" delivered. The ceremony is carried out under the direction of an Inna Sayla or Gandur whose position is achieved after years of training and assisting in ceremonies. Symbolically positioned, the Gandur chants, (laying in a hammock suspended in the center of the ceremonial house.)

Replacement singers alternate continuously for 4 days. Two items that are prominent throughout the ceremony are the long cigars and the braziers in which the cocoa beans are burned. Additionally, the ceremony involves the making of rattles and painted balsa wood mnemonic devices for use in the recitation of chants.

The ceremony ends with a ritual dance performed by a small group of people in which anyone can join in. Flutes are used to invoke the spirit world.

For the final ceremony, completed upon one's death, the deceased is sewn up in a hammock, while close relatives and friends mourn for a day and a night. A special death chant is performed to insure a safe journey through the long and dangerous route to heaven. Heaven being a place made of solid gold, from whence their name "Golden People" derives, where no one works and the wind does the sweeping. In Heaven all of their possessions are present in replica form. Heaven has different places for the white and for the brown Indian.

The women relatives chant the person's virtues: i.e., "My husband is dead. He was a good hunter. He provided well. He kept us supplied with food. Now God has called him. He is gone. What shall we do?"

On the second day the body is taken to the mainland for burial in a family plot. The person is buried along with the possessions he will need for his journey in the afterlife. His face is covered with a gourd to protect him from woodpeckers. The dead are never spoken of afterwards.

The Cuna and the Chocoe both possess instrumental and vocal music. Songs, prayers or incantations are usually of a special nature and are executed by Shamans; Neles in Cuna and Jaibanas in Choco for the purpose of enlisting the aid of benevolent spirits to effect cures in their patients. (In the past for supernatural and magical effects) Instrumental music generally accompanies festivals and dance for such events as: agricultural rituals, puberty rites and social occasions.

The Music

Side One

Band One: Camu Burwi (Flute Music)

On the Island of Rio Tigré every Thursday night, members of the dance group Noga Cope - (House of Dance) practice their traditional form of dance. The Congress or governing body on the island, which meets almost nightly, has assigned about 80 or 90 members to practice on the communal wharf to learn the dance to prepare them for their role in the upcoming events. (Dance is practiced faithfully every week unless some member of the community is ill and the music disturbs them.) Practice is broken up into 6 or 7 sets of 12 dancers; 6 male and six female consisting of young children of about 8 or 9 to people in their thirties. The men blow the double sets of pan pipes while the women shake the gourd rattles. The dancing that accompanies this music begins with two rows of men and women facing each other. This pattern then changes into a circle alternately interspersed by men and women. The women begin to weave in and out of the men's positions and then return, reversing the flow of movement. Other patterns as well are practiced. A distinctive polarity is evident as the men are more or less stationary, as their foot stomping accentuates each forceful gust of air through the flutes. The women keep a circular rhythm flowing with the beat of their rattles. (The background noise is from the onlookers who come to enjoy the entertainment)

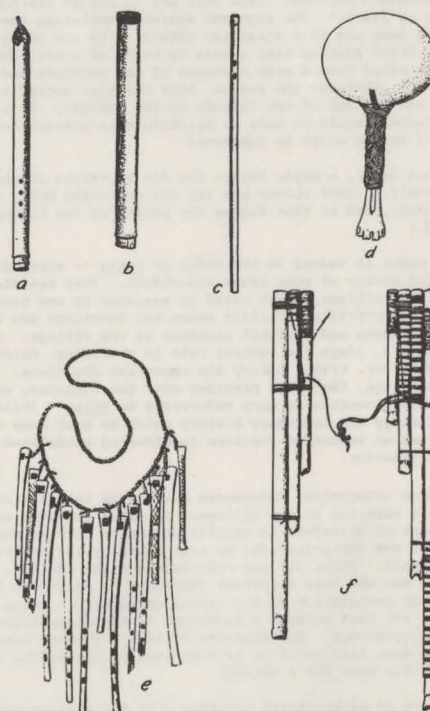


FIGURE 60.—Cuna musical instruments. a, Flute with attached air duct of bird quill. b, One of a set of single pipes, played in sets, one to a person. c, Simple end-blown flute used in ceremonies. (After Nordenskiöld, 1938, fig. 10.) d, Rattle used in girls' ceremonies. e, Necklace of plug-flutes made of a bird bone. (After Izikowitz, 1935, figs. 44 and 219.) f, Panpipes. (After Nordenskiöld, 1938, fig. 11.)

Bands 2 & 3 Cuna Lullabies sung by Christina Acosta

The lullabies are significant in that they reflect a form of cultural conditioning and indoctrination that begins in infancy and contributes to the child's orientation as to its future role in Cuna society. The lullaby is also one medium for female vocal

expression in a culture that generally assigns this role to men.
 (Such as prayers and initiation rituals) See Joly pp 351-8
 Translations were provided by Christina's brother Diomedes Acosta.
 The lullabies are usually sung with the rattle to put the baby to sleep.
 (The rattle in this instance was not a decorated calabash, but
 has a plastic globe.)

lullaby for a little boy (Band Two)

mmmm mmm mmm
 pani machitola pipi kueye
 you are a little man(hombrecito)
 pani machitolapi sogue cua pani va pipi soeti kutoe
 you gofishing for small fish
 yo tu mahab keipitipe bani ma pipi soeti kutoedi
 mmm mmm mmm
 pani yo ehegar sabuluba yaba pani gamakeili katoe pani kutoedi
 when you are bigger you will go walking in the mountains
 pani machereti sokedi
 when you are a man
 mmm mmm mmm
 pani ocopa marki pani arpadi kutoe
 when you grow up you will work (harvest) coconuts
 yo napir mana pe dagueki kutoe
 your mother wants you to go but when you are bigger
 pani machereti sogue era ye
 mmm mmm mmm
 yo vankaarbaedi kutoe ye pani sabalu yaba masi ti guenai kutoe
 pani machereti soguekua
 you are a little man
 pani wakudarba ani pankudoe va pipi soenahate
 in the canoe you go fishing
 nana beidu mas deusi
 mother is cooking
 mmm mmm mmm
 Be ani machereti be ani punoloenaslie suei
 you are a little man, you are not a woman (girl)
 Be ani nadele soke dada a mesenade
 when you go to the mountains you will be farming in the sun all day
 everyday you are a little man

Rituals: Healing and Cycle of Life

There are several ceremonies and fiestas that still are practiced by the Cuna that have not been compromised by outside influences. Strict controls and instruction are given to insure continuation of the important traditions.
 Important vocal elements are practiced by the men, such as the orations or prayers executed by the Neles or shamans (spirit healers) to summon the help of benevolent spirits to aid in the process of healing.
Gandurs who are the official singers at the puberty rites, are also men.



YEVIZA
 Dance typical of cultural mesh between NEGRO & CHOCOE community.

Band 4 Aquanusa (stone) a healing oration sung by Wilfredo Morris

Healing for the Cuna depends on a number of factors: music, prayers, devices spiritual assistance and botanical knowledge of roots, leaves and barks. A practice shared with other indigenous groups in the Caribbean and Central America is the use of healing devices or mediums through which spirits are summoned to assist in the healing process. In Haiti the shamans or Houngans make use of Pre-Columbian Celts or Axeheads found in the ground, they are called Pierre Loa or "Belle Pierre" (Spirit Stones or beautiful stones) In Nicaragua and Honduras they are called by the Miskito and Sumu Indians " Thunder stones" and are thought to be lighting bolts. (Conzemius) According to Wilfredo Morris who sings this particular prayer called "Aquanusa" stresses the importance and function of the stones along with the carved wooden spirit images called "Nuchus" (The ones that are alive) He also related the following information about the sacred stones:
 "The Cuna Nele is communicated to by the spirit of the stone, which is only found in a stream bed. Each stream bed does not contain more than two. The stone was placed in the stream by God for the specific purpose of being used for healing and other magical uses."

In this oration for the Aquanusa, the text begins with an introduction to the spirit of the stone to the person being cured. (In this case, it is the man's son who is suffering from Asthma). The introduction calls on the spirit of the stone to help heal the boy. It also tells to the boy what the stone is and where it came from and why its power will work. (Each stone has a specific name)

As for the healing mechanism or process it was explained to me in this manner: A person has approximately seven souls, these make up a healthy individual. When a person is ill it is because one of his spirits has been captured, thus upsetting his balance. If his spirit or spirits are not returned the person will grow ill and die. One must go to a Nele to have the spirit returned.
 For example, A man may have gone to the mountains or to his farm to work. During the course of his work he may have received a sudden shock or he may have been scared by a snake or other animal or evil spirit. In this case the snake may have abducted one of his spirits, unbeknownst to the individual. At any rate the individual becomes ill. It is now the job of the Shaman or curandero or Nele to seek a cure. This is accomplished with the help of the Aquanusa and Nuchus. The smoke of the smoldering Cacao bean, is used to give life to or attract the spirits to these objects. The function of the stones are to trace the actions of the individual (spiritually done) to determine where ones spirit was abducted. The Aquanusa is directed by the oration of the Shaman. As the person lays in the hammock, the smoke will drift up to the person and the spirit of the stone will be able to locate ones missing spirit. In this case the Aquanusa will go and find the snake and grab the spirit away from the snake, if it cannot grab it the snake will be killed by the Aquanusa. Then the Aquanusa will return with the person's lost spirit.
 The person will return to health the next day. For four days after the oration will continue to insure that the person will stay well.

*Krieger (p. 86) mentions the term "Niyakkan" employed as fetishes protecting them against the bad spirits. The Tule (Cuna) Indians insist that these stone celts fell from the sky.

Text of Oration

Band 4 Kabier (piguante chicas) Akuanusa

(spelling and text by Wilfredo Morris)

iha uala cana, aidedy yala bali, tio nele di peca uhu sumbacanadi
 siyeye nasa cuealle.
 a special stone in the river.
 Nele nusa casiele akua nele kuna ca nele na pedula ieanali.
 It was placed by God in the bottom of the river(to be used when one is ill?)

yabequilaqua pedu palachi nucu bi etarpemai ya pagui laqua pedui
 uialegue mai
 bacachi neuu be maque mai
 bucachi nueilili uauilai maque maie

The child is suffering
 The child is trembling in the hammock, all of the cords of the ropes
 in the hammock are shaking
 (saying a prayer to the Akua nusa to help the child)

The child is suffering in his hammock
we would like you to help

Another important prayer is sung by the Nele for a pregnant woman when she is having labor pains or a difficult birth. It is called Mu Igal. The Nele will sit beneath the woman's hammock and chant under a red fabric two yards long. In addition the censer will be smoking with the burning cacao, calling upon the spirits to help the child to be born. (fees are charged by the Neles for his services, such as eight coconuts)

Band 5 Inna Suid or Cammu Suid

Of the three fiestas given for the girl in conjunction with her puberty rites (at least on the island of Tigrd), the first is called Segusa. The Segusa is given at the time of the Menarche or first menstruation. and is a one to two day festival. During this time the girl is bathed and placed in a seclusion hut made of leaves. All of the boys and girls share a special breakfast of bread and drink two beverages; first coffee and then Cacao. There is no singing for this celebration. On the second day, spicy food is eaten and a ritual bathing is performed by both girls and boys. The girls bathe the girls and the boys bathe the boys with a calabash bowl. On this day a special food is served usually rice with meat and matamoro.

The second and most important is the Inna Suid or Cammu Suid, it is the hair cutting ceremony which last for four days. It is generally a surprise for the girl and is not discussed before hand. In the case of Tigrd for example an Inna Suid given in mid November which will include six girls, the rituals will be split up into three huts each containing two to two girls each. The chichas or festivals with fermented drinks begun in November will last on into December. (The chichas average about ten days each.)

The Inna Mutiki is the fiesta in which the girl has her body painted black with a vegetable dye called genipa americana. It is after this action that the girl is free to marry.

Text for the Inna Suid

For this Ordeal the Gandur will sing for four days to the girls. Actually the Gandurs will sing in shifts, changing when one is tired, the girls must endure the four days. The songs with their symbolism are sung by the Gandur who acts as a spiritual guide and leads the girl through the ordeal.

The gandur begins with something like this:

yala nacase ma peca pal amba cutapi
yala nacase quila maetapi
yala ama sia sia yala enaque maie,
auca sia isa yala a pemeii
yala narzabe yala se na peca ni que maie.....
(and so forth for four days and nights)

The entire festival has sexual symbolism and is supposed to be a re-enactment of the girl's birth. (Cheville)

Financially this ceremony is comparable to a large wedding in magnitude in the states. (It cost the parents approximately \$1000. US.)

The following is a rough summary and explanation of the long, hypnotic and monotonous orations that continue for four days:

"We arrive on a small hill (Loma)

We will remain here for awhile and lay down next to the hill to rest
after we will climb the nest hill
after we leave we will arrive at a flat place with a stream, when
you arrive you will see various butterflies (I will show the girl spiritually)
we will then come to another hill with many butterflies, see how some stay on
the flowers and some just fly by.

You are afraid but don't be afraid, for I know all of the prayers and I will lead you.

See the butterflies, they are only symbols they can't do anything
I will put you in a white sheet so that they can't see you.

some are very soft, some are very big and some are white
Don't be afraid, come we will go to another hill,
we are going to see what we can find,
it is a painted hill it is called Loma Pintado
there is another painted hill, one small and one is large
then you will pass another hill with plants (palms)
but be very careful
I will take you, this hill has plants with fruits and birds with long beaks
the birds are eating the fruits (they are called longbeaks) hummingbirds
We will come to other hills
Now we are close to a dangerous time
Hold on so you don't fall, now will come strong winds and a storm
We are coming to different hills with different names
Be careful. so that you don't fall as we pass through the storm and winds
grab on to me
follow me, walk quickly so we will arrive in a safe place
If we stay here we will have a lot of problems



CHOCOE

Prior to the actual painting with JAGUA. The geometric design is first sketched by lightly scratching the skin with a bamboo or cane stick.

THE CHOCOE

The Chocoe live in the Darien province of Panama and in the Department del Choco of Colombia. In the Darien province, where this music was recorded, they live along the banks of the rivers Chucunague, Tuira, Balsa, Chico, Turquesa, Jaque, and Sambu, and in small groups near the Bagre River. They are basically a nomadic people but have established permanent residences in various locations. There are two distinct dialects of the Chocoe in Panama, they are the Embera and the Wounaan.

The principal means of subsistence is hunting and fishing. Around the rivers and river banks the men and boys spend most of their time hunting for Kukwha, a bottom feeding scaly fish that they harpoon with a single pointed steel rod with the use of a diving mask, as well as for crayfish and iguanas that live along the river banks. Hunting is done with a bow and arrow but is rapidly being replaced by the rifle or shotgun. In the forest they hunt for deer, peccaries, armadillos, agoutis, monkeys and several species of birds. In addition to the wild animals, they supplement their diet with pigs, chickens and ducks that they raise.

Transportation is by canoe, (long and narrow dugouts with platform ends) generally seen poling up and down the rivers filled with bananas or plantains, transporting them to coastal vessels or places of sale.

Choco dwellings are erected either in villages or as separate houses scattered along the river banks. They are built high off the ground on piles or stilts and have open sides. The floors are raised about eight feet from the ground and supported on each side by a row of four palm posts, which extend through and bear the weight of the roof. Trunks of the Iriatea palm, split open and flattened, form the flooring. The roof is palm thatched and entry to the house is up through the floor by means of a notched pole, which is turned over when the dogs are not wanted around, or to indicate the absence of the family. The kitchen hearth is built at the corner of the house least exposed to the prevailing wind and consists of a square frame filled with clay, and a few loose stones on which to set the pots. Such a house has ideal ventilation and affords at the same time a shelter against the rain and the excessive dampness of the soil in the wet season. Children sleep in hammocks while adults sleep on a bed of wood or bark cloth with their heads on wooden pillows or head rests.

The dress of both the men and women is striking: The women generally go about the village bare breasted, adorned with only a beaded necklace (for ceremonial occasions a necklace of coins), and a wraparound skirt called a "paruma". The men, although their dress has changed lately, wear pants and shirts. Some of the older men, especially the Jaibana or Shama, adhere to tradition by wearing a long loin cloth and distinctive dutch-boy or bowl-cut hair style. Everyone in the village at some time

will paint their bodies with highly decorative geometric lines or solid colors in blackish-blue body paint. (From the plant "Jagua" Genipa americana.) Each design is unique but follows certain guidelines.

Each village has a chief and a council, in the case of Corosol on the River Chico. Several medicine men or Jaibana, live in the village and administer the religious and medical rites. The Jaibana must go through a period of training where he carves wooden ships and numerous sculptured figures that represent various spirits.

Carved wooden fetish-staffs are utilized in certain rites to help cure the sick or to practice witchcraft. Sick people are believed to be possessed by evil spirits. When a patient is to be cured, he is placed in a little hut made of wooden slats. (Representations of the evil spirits are painted on his back and on wooden slats hung nearby.) The Jaibana will exorcise the evil spirits with the aid of chants and with the spirit who is dwelling in his fetish-staffs, (sticks in the shape of humans and animals each representing a disease). An important ceremonial action is the consecration of the chicha by the Jaibana in which stories, and prayers to the spirits are used.

Music of the Chocoe (Choco)

The Chocoe music in this album was recorded in the Darien Jungle at two locations, Yaviza and Corazal. It is a collection of the most apparent music to found and does not represent a lengthy study or analysis.

Yaviza is predominately a Negro community situated high on the point of land where the rivers Chucunaque and Chico meet. Aside from being an outpost for the National Guard, it is important for being a trading center and collection point for the bananas that the Indians sell to the collectors for sale in Panama City. It is also as far as one can travel by road on the Trans-Darien Highway without the use of winches and pontoons. It is almost impossible to reach Yaviza on this road during the rainy season since the remaining few miles are dirt road. Progress is being achieved in completing this road.

Aside from the Negro community there is a mixture of Choco Indians, Latins from Panama and Columbia. The Chocoes living here wear more clothes than they do in the outlying villages. Yaviza also has a large Catholic Church, a hospital nearby and an airstrip with daily flights to Panama City.

Corazal is more remote, not on the commercial mainstream. It is about the third or fourth village upstream from Yaviza on the Rio Chico. It takes about 3-4 hours to arrive by motorized dugout canoe, depending on how deep the river is. It is much slower going when the river is shallow and one needs to get out and push the boat upstream.

Many elements of the electronic age have begun to replace some of the traditional practices as the world of radios, discos and outboard motors has begun to draw the Chocoe into the consumer society.

Until recently the Chocoe have been able to defend and preserve their way of life by retreating further into the jungle, but as the non-autochthonous cultures push into their territory they have found themselves literally with their back up against the Cordillera.

(Population growth for the Darien has been: Negro 3.2%, White 2.9% and 2.6% for the Chocoe) Duke p.345

The Chocoe living in Yaviza have shown strong signs of meshing culturally with the Negro population there by adopting their music, styles and way of life. Historically the Chocoe, divided among two distinct dialects: the Waunana or the Noanama with a population of 2,500 and the Embera or Empera with a population of 20,500 have performed agriculturally oriented ritual dances, conducted in circular file around painted wooden A-Framed spirit lodges.

The Purpose of these dances being one of petitioning for spiritual assistance in the success of the growing and harvesting of food crops.

The Dances were known by such names as the Dance of the Chicken, the Dance of the Butterfly, the Dance of Strength and the dance of the Pelican, to name a few.

Strange contrasts exist today between the traditional and the modern. Semi-nude men and women who paint their bodies with beautifully geometrically shaped designs can be seen wildly cheering their favorite team in a basketball tournament held in their village, complete with regulation size court down to the chalked-in foul lines and uniformed players with team names and numbers sewn onto their colorful jerseys.

For the recording at Corazal, which I thought would be something on the order of the traditional circular dance as described by Krieger in 1926, in terms of

context, I was sadly disappointed. Ritualized drum music and singing had been replaced by Latinised Merengue music enhanced by a sound system. (Amplifier, microphone, speakers and electric base guitar. Electrical current was supplied by a electric generator brought up from Yaviza along with bottled and distilled drinks)

I had to look hard to find any individuals who knew or still remembered the traditional songs. Those who did know were very shy and would probably not have acquiesced, save for their "festive attitude" assisted by several tragas of "Aguardiente".

Among the rafters of his breezy wind blown open sided hut, situated high above the Rio Chico, Demetio Apochito pulled down a dusty skin and wood drum that had been stored next to his prized 22 rifle. The hut was buzzing with activity and picking up in excitement as the preparation for the big dance that evening was picking up. The women were now busily painting their bodies with "jagua" and constructing mylar headdresses as the men would arrive with their canoes bringing fish and game. It was quite difficult to get a clear and clean recording in light of this activity. Tempers were beginning to flare under the influence of the high-proof alcohol that was being consumed. (Fiesta-Time for the Chocoes is also a time for settling differences and venting angers and frustrations.)

The songs on bands 1, 2, 5 and 6 are the songs that were recorded and represent those that were remembered from the past. Although the musicians seemed skilled at their performance (they were also good at improvising, using a plastic bucket for a replacement drum) the feeling of their music was more of an African influence than that of a forest tribe of the Americas.

As cultural and musical patterns changed at Yaviza, so did they in the surrounding communities, for what was currently "in vogue" in Yaviza, (such as the music of Hector Berrugate himself a Chocoe Indian) would soon find its way upstream to Corazal.

"Mentab Subwae" -Band Four Healing Prayer- Spiritual Invocation

Although it seemed as though no real source of traditional music or spiritual practice existed, I was relieved to find there still exists in many communities a person whose role it is to maintain a connection between the community at large and the spiritual realm. That person is the shaman or the Jaibana as he is called. His function is through the usage of specific incantations, herbal medicines and spiritual assistance principally that of a healer but acts as the guardian of tradition.

During the several days leading up to the festival for the patron saint, the Jaibana could be heard nightly practicing his incantations and rustling his palm leaves as he summoned the assistance of his tutelary spirits for treating members of the community.

For a fee, a bottle of aguardiente and \$10 the Jaibana would permit me to witness one of his healing rituals. (The Choco strongly resemble the Cayapa of Ecuador, in their usage of Tutelary staffs or canes and the drinking of Ayahuasca or Yage or Pilde as its called in Embera or Dapa in Noanama which is an Hallucinogenic drink prepared from the vine (Banisteriopsis Caapi) and prepared by boiling a liquid into a condensed drink that looks like dark coffee with a very bitter taste. This drink increases the shamans night vision by stimulating the eyes rods and cones and reportedly enables the shaman to perceive visual images and manifestations the spirits who help him in his curing as well as those that are causing illness.

Three of us were present during this ritual and oration, the Jaibana, his son and myself.

He began in a darkened room of his house, by spitting a fine spray of a alcohol in the corners of the room. Several glasses half-filled with alcohol were covered by large banana leaves. After spitting the fine spray, to give drink to the spirits and to entice them into assistance he began to shake the palm leaves and begin his chanting. (healing)

(several times the microphone that I was using was affected by the wind produced by the shaking of the palm leaves, causing a mike boom)



CHOCOE

Young girls at CORAZAL demonstrate dance file position with hand on the "PARUMA" (wrap-around skirt) of the person in front.
(AGRICULTURAL DANCE)

The Sounds

Side Two

Band One - "Bastica", festive music, "Cancion de Chicha"

"Chicha" a common name in Latin America for many types of fermented drinks made from sugar cane, corn, bananas, etc. Traditionally used for festive occasions

Musicians: Ligoria Ohlea - Skin and wood Drum

Choris Cerco - metal flute

Demetio Apochito - Plastic bucket Drum

Band Two - "Nomina" - same as band one

Band Three - "Aru Ruah" - obscure child's song sung by Ana Donsoles at Yaviza

Band Four - "Mentah Subwae" Sung in conjunction with healing ritual by Chocoe Shaman - Jaibana (Jainbana)

Band Five - "Forget about me" Sung by Demetion Apochito refers to a lost love, the singer is telling his lost love to forget about him

Band Six - "Remember me to the Ancient Times" - Demetio Apochito
A possible reference to the ancestral spirits give my regards to the ancients, the singer although Choco mentioned the ancestors of "Africa" (A possible adoption of African ancestral Spirits?)

Band Seven - "Musica muy Buena" Performed at Yaviza by the band of Hector Berrugate who is also the Vocalist. This is the same type of Entertainment that was brought up to village of Corazal for the festival of the Patron Saint.

Musicians: Hector Berrugate - Accordion
Didimu - small snare drum
Jose - "Tunbero" congo drum
Roman - "Chirruca" Gourd Scraper
Abril - "Baso" - Base guitar
Cholo - Animador

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