

Recorded by DAVID BLAIR STIFFLER



ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4375

LOWLAND TRIBES OF ECUADOR



COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

LOWLAND TRIBES OF ECUADOR

SIDE ONE

Band	Tribe	Type of Song	Time
Band 1	Huarani	Narrative Song	3:09
Band 2	Colorado	Marimba Instrumental	1:24
Band 3	Colorado	Marimba Instrumental	1:31
Band 4	Colorado	Marimba Instrumental	2:07
Band 5	Colorado	Leaf Bundle Healing Technique	3:38
Band 6	Cayapa	Festive Song	1:38
Band 7	Cayapa	Harmonica "Song of Ourselves"	1:15
Band 8	Cayapa	Harmonica "Caramba"	:59
Band 9	Cayapa	"Hadina" Spirit Calling	2:24
Band 10	Cayapa	Cerro Colorado	1:36
Band 11	Cayapa	Healing Segment	1:39
Band 12	Cayapa	Leaf bundle on Baby	1:36
TOTAL—Side One			23:37

SIDE TWO

Band	Tribe	Type of Song	Time
Band 1	Cofan	Spirit Intrusion Removal	7:05
Band 2	Siona	Wire Bow Instrumental	3:53
Band 3	Siona	Wire Bow (Hernando & Luis)	2:42
Band 4	Siona	Spirit Manifestation (Wire Bow, boots, seed pod necklace)	1:16
Band 5	Siona	Yagé Ceremony (Opening oration) participants commenting on Visions	3:42
Band 6	Secoya	Festive (Chicha?) Song Women singing	4:02
Band 7	Secoya	Festive Song	1:20
TOTAL—Side Two			24:26

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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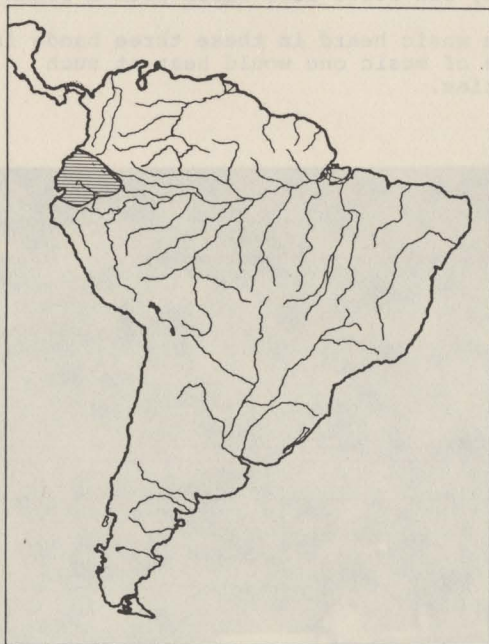
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The Country of Ecuador is composed of three principal types of terrain. The coastal region, extends along the western (Pacific) warm lowlands and is characterized by inlets, lagoons, mangrove and palm-lined beaches delineated by fast winding rivers that flow from the high Andes mountains. The Inter-Andean region whose terrain is characterized by mountainous slopes, volcanoes, irrigation systems, terracing and agricultural communities is the central mountainous region which consists of the two cordilleras of the Andes (the western and eastern) that run from the north to the south of the country. The Ecuadorian Montana, in the east, consists of a vast expanse of primary forests that descends rapidly towards the great alluvial plain that forms the Amazonia basin and its tributaries.

This regional diversity has had a definite influence in the conditioning and social patterning of the indigenous populations inhabiting the various Ecuadorian biotypes. In this album, the tribes of the Coastal Region and of the Ecuadorian Montana will be presented.



SIDE ONE

BAND ONE

Until 1956 the rapid rivers and the dense covering of the Amazonian rain forest, in Ecuadorian Montana, coupled with self-imposed isolation, kept the Waorani (or Auca, a Quechua Indian term for savage) from the view of "cowode" or outsiders. As demands for resources and farmlands increased so did the penetration of the "cowode" into the territory of the Waorani. As reprisal for these intrusions, several outsiders met their death at the point of Waorani wooden spears, the most publicized being the death of five shotgun carrying missionaries who landed on "Palm Beach" with their small Piper aircraft in 1957. Since that time, the "auca" have become missionized and "pacified" and taught to wear clothes.

The Waorani, who number approximately 500, live in four or five major groups with a range of 20,000 square kilometers. Little is known about and no reference is made to their existence in early historical chronicles, or in their own tribal lore. The only explanation as to their origin is that they came from "downriver a long time ago". As with other groups in the Montana their language group is astonishingly isolated.

Prior to the missionaries arrival, and among the more remote groups today, the Waorani lived naked except for a cord tied around their waist. They practice body painting and ear-lobe deformation. The bottom lobe is cut and a round balsawood plug inserted.

The Waorani have the distinction of not having any of the common diseases of modern man such as high blood pressure, heart disease, or cancer. They are in a general state of good health as a result of strenuous exercise and a high level of nutrition and selection. In the event of illness the Waorani traditionally resort to their shaman or ido who drinks ayahuasca or mii and uses spirit helpers or wenoe in his healing and witchcraft.

This song is the tale of the experience of two Waorani men who had just returned from a trip deep in the forest where they acted as guides for a couple from Survival International. The couple was visiting each of the Waorani groups in an effort to help them gain title to their traditional lands. The song is a narrative, as it tells of their canoe journey and their long walk through the forest. It also relates their fondness for the couple, Steven and Jenny. Back in their home village, their guides' relatives created a similar song telling of the two visitors and of their adventures.

This song is a product of group participation. The strong communal consciousness of the villagers makes each member in the group an element of the formative process in creating the song.



Siona Shaman playing wire-stringed wooden bow.

BANDS, TWO, THREE AND FOUR

In contrast to the Waorani's music which has been developed in cultural isolation, the music of these bands of the Pacific lowland Colorado tribe seem to carry the influence of African cultures.

The wooden and bamboo marimba on these selections were played at a roadside tourist stop. The musician, a Colorado man in his forties, kept his traditional dress and supported and supplemented his income by charging tourists a fee for his solos.

The Colorado and Cayapa are the last surviving indian groups living in the lush western lowlands of Western Ecuador which is now populated by Spanish-speaking inhabitants of mixed-indian, Negro and white ancestry. However, despite this acculturation, the native groups have retained their traditional healing and religious practices.

Although the music attracts tourists to the area, it is the fame and reputation of such important healers or brujos, as Arbraham Calacazon, that bring patients from far and wide, seeking magic cures for illnesses that don't respond to native treatment. Success is attributed to herbal medicines and witchcraft. In Band Five, the sounds heard are of a Colorado healing session. The selection is by "Narcenal Calacazon," son of the now deceased Abraham Calacazon, the famous Shaman-Gobenador. This is what one might expect to hear from the shaman, as he enlists the aid of his spirit familiars or patron healing spirit to remedy a stubborn disease.

In the lowland tradition of shamanism, the native narcotic Nepe (Bannisteriopsis caapi) is drunk by both the shaman and patient.



Officiating Siona shaman. Side Two, Band Five.

BAND SIX, SEVEN AND EIGHT

Along with the Colorado, the Cayapa share the western coastal region. The Cayapa are a river people who inhabit the northwestern jungles of the Esmeraldas province. They number approximately 2,000:

The Cayapa survived into the twentieth century by retreating into a habitat inaccessible to the Spanish and Inca invasions.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Cayapa, although fishing and hunting supply a large percentage of their food. Most families raise bananas, plantain, sugarcane, cocoa and sweet manioc. In addition, tobacco, cotton, maize, yams and pineapples are frequently cultivated. Plantains and food caught along the riverside (fish, crustaceans and shellfish) form the staple food of the Cayapa.

For festive activities such as agricultural rituals or fiestas, dance and intoxication are encouraged and facilitated by the drinking of "Chicha", a fermented beverage made of sugarcane or cassava. In the interest of the community, ancestral spirits are invited to participate in the revelry. Intoxication, as it was explained to me, is a means of showing respect and enables the spirits to show their presence. Sometimes a death or misfortune can upset the social equilibrium of the entire closely-knit community and the shamans' services are required to exorcise the evil force or presence by specific procedures including chants, music, music, dance and group intoxication. This usually results in a dramatic improvement in morale and the community can start life again with a fresh start.

The music heard in these three bands is the type of music one would hear at such festivities.



Siona ayahuasca ceremony on the Aquarico River.

BAND NINE

This recording was made during an actual healing session along the banks of the Cayapa river of Esmeraldas Province.

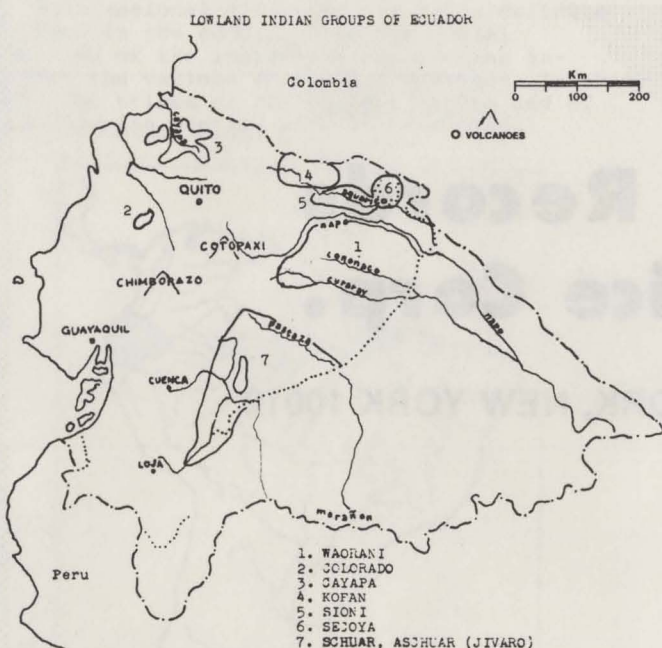
The session began about nine o'clock at night and lasted into the early hours of the morning. It began in a ritualized manner with the shaman and his spiritual paraphernalia or mesa occupying the center floorspace

of his open-sided thatched hut. The "mesa" or table contained several objects such as bits of glass and stone, a candle, a calabash of caapi (Bannisteriopsis Caapi), a palm-leaf bundle and several carved wooden objects. The most distinctive of the objects were the long carved wooden baton and the small carved anthropomorphic figure, believed to have a connection with, or to represent the shaman's patron spirits that he summoned in the course of the session.

Several patients had positioned themselves near to the shaman, lying on reed mats. They would be awakened as their time came to interact with the shaman and his spirits.

Four distinct changes were noticed in the chanting within a span of an hour to an hour and a half. The first (hadina) and the "Cerro Colorado" segments, I believe were calls to summon his patron spirits. The next two changes, including the rustle of the leaf bundle were the actual healing and exorcism segment. The shaman gently beat the leaf bundle over the baby's body and then spit a fine spray of caapi over the baby and its mother.

The technique of sucking out an intrusive object or malignancy is documented on this band. This recording was done on the floor of a Cofan shaman's house on the bank of the Aguarico river. The shaman's patient in this case was his infant granddaughter. The sounds heard are the spirit healing chants and the sucking out of the intrusive object. The session began after dark. The shaman took a drink of a very bitter tasting drink (either Caapi or Datura) from a small gourd or calabash cup. After the drug took effect, maybe 10 to 15 minutes later, the shaman began his summoning chant. The actual healing sequence took place about a half hour later. I was not quite prepared for the intensity of this experience; nausea, diarrhea, tremors and infrared vision. The shaman and his apprentice were sitting by quietly and not affected as I was. During the healing, the shaman would bend over the woman and her baby and make sucking noises. The glass or pebble sounds mixed with those of throat clearing noises signify extraction and capture of the malignant spirit essence.



Kofan shaman removing spirit intrusive object from infant.

SIDE TWO

BAND ONE

The Kofan are another lowland tropical forest tribe whose culture was adapted to an extremely warm, humid and densely forested region. The hunting and fishing, and slash and burn economy produced a low population density and small communities. Within the small communities social and religious structures developed to satisfy the needs of survival within the environment.

The arrival of the Spanish and their subsequent penetration into the isolated enclaves produced cultural changes and affected the relative isolation of the Kofan.

The Kofan, who were briefly missionized by the Franciscans in 1632, still managed to retain their native forms of healing that bound them by tradition to other tropical lowland tribes. A common practice amongst the lowland tribes is the practice of utilizing hallucinogens for diagnosis and enlisting the help of spirits in healing.

BANDS TWO THROUGH SEVEN

Further downstream on the Aguarico river, another lowland tribe, the Siona or Sioni, performed rituals with many similarities to those of the Cofan.

The Sioni, along with their neighbors the Sekoya, offer some strange examples of cultural diffusion. The two tribes are close in proximity. Together, they ranged along ten miles of river front, one in a missionized environment, and the other in its traditional ways. The missionary's aim is to replace the shaman. The music on bands two through five was recorded among the Sioni, the traditional group. The music on these bands was created for and centered on the spiritual association of the Cofan with the sacred plant Ayahuasca or Yage. The spiritual guidance the Cofan attribute to this plant should not be underestimated.

In bands two and three, the instrumental is played on a wire-stringed wooden bow in a method similar to that used for a Jew's harp. Hernando and Luis, the musicians,

told me that they learned the music from the Yage, the spirit of the plant. The instrument would be used in a ritual for boys who would be receiving tutelage from their father, the officiating shaman. During the ayahuasca ritual, similar music is heard, influenced no doubt by their visions brought on by the drink prepared from the plant. The setting for these recordings was a small hut or carbet about a thirty minute walk from the main settlement, in the midst of a forest clearing specifically erected for the purpose of conducting ayahuasca sessions.

Preparations for the ritual begin early in the morning with the cutting of the ayahuasca stems that would be macerated and cooked into a bitter-tasting tea. A period of fasting would be observed during the day. Only small morsels of bird flesh or Cassava would be consumed. Other than tending the fire as it simmered the water to produce the concentrated liquid, the young men spent their time carving darts for their blowguns, and practiced shooting small colorful birds whose skin and feathers would be used to decorate their ritual costume.



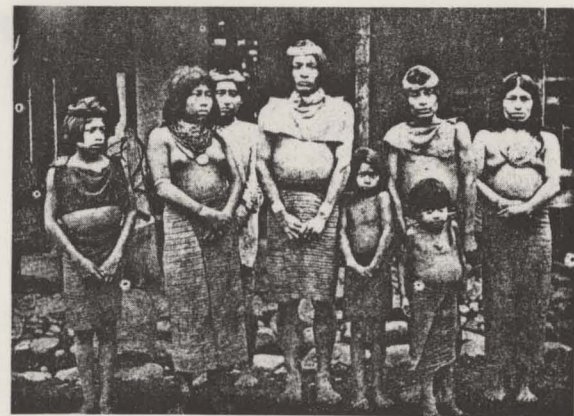
Gabriel Calazacón, a famous shaman *curandero* of the Colorados, during healing rituals.

On band four, the bow is heard in the midst of the ayahuasca ritual along with the tramping sounds of rubber boots and the bandolier shell necklace. This was a spontaneous performance of symbolic spiritual interaction. It was repeated several times during the course of the ritual.

In band five, the commencement of the ayahuasca ritual begins with the officiating shaman mixing a spiritual call. This call follows the "rush" or arrival of the initial effects of the drug. As the ritual proceeds you will hear the other participants comment on their visions. They make special reference to the archtypal "jaguar vision" that so predominates tropical forest tribes shamanic visionary experience. The session ended the next morning following a night of visions, tobacco smoking and shamanic singing. The shaman would devote a special time to the healing of his patient, accomplished by shaking his leaf bundle and blowing smoke, singing his spirit song and presumably exorcising the evil spirits' presence.



Colorado and Cayapa Indians. Top (left): Colorado man, early 20th century. Top (right): Tsatchela (Colorado) man wearing silver nose ornament. Bottom (left): Tsatchela (Colorado) men playing marimba. Bottom (right): Cayapa harvest of plantains. (After Rivet, 1905, opp. p. 178; after Von Hagen, 1939, pls. 7, 10; and after Barrett, 1925, pl. 60.)



Colorado and Cayapa Indians. Top: Colorado, early 20th century. Bottom: Cayapa, same period. (After Rivet, 1905, opp. p. 186, and Barrett, 1925, p. 23.)

In bands six and seven, music of the Secoya Tribes, further downriver from the Siona and the Cofan, is presented. In contrast to the Siona, the Secoya settlement is heavily influenced by the presence of missionaries who had established a church in their community. Church service and hymn singing had now become an important or dominant social factor for them. Songs such as heard on bands six and seven were becoming rare as the traditional religious context and inspiration for festive songs are curtailed and supplanted by Christian hymns and religious observance.

CREDITS

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