



MUSIC of COLOMBIA

RECORDED BY A. H. WHITEFORD

W 6804 FOLKWAYS RECORDS & SERVICE CORP., N. Y.

Franklin Boggs

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1687
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1954

MUSIC LP

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MARCHA ROYAL	SECRETO A VOCES
BRISAS DEL PAMPLONITA	EL SOTARENO
LA OPERA	BELLA
PERUCHO SARRIA	EL-RAYO-X
ENIGMA	BOCACCIO

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MUSIC of COLOMBIA

RECORDED BY A. H. WHITEFORD

These recordings were made in 1951 by Dr. Andrew H. Whiteford in the little city of Popayan, Department of Cauca, in Southwestern Colombia. He and his family lived in Popayan for a year while conducting a social anthropological study of the community under the auspices of the Logan Museum of Anthropology at Beloit College, and with the assistance of grants from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and the Social Science Research Council.

Popayan is in the central cordillera of the Andes. It was at one time the ruling seat for the greater part of Northwestern South America.

Two types of traditional music are found in Popayan: the murga and the chirimía. The Spanish word murga means "a wandering band of street musicians." It is sometimes called a conjunto. Any combination of instruments may play it but it is best typified by groups composed of guitar, bandola or mandolin, and, in Colombia the tiple. At times an accordion may be introduced or other instruments such as drums and maracas. The guitar is sometimes homemade and sometimes imported from Spain but it is always the Spanish guitar. The mandolin is standard but the bandola, which frequently displaces it as the melody instrument is probably a local derivation. It has four sets of strings which are tuned to the same intervals as the first four strings on the guitar. There are three strings in each set and they are played with a pick. The body of the bandola is round or pear shaped but it is flat and fairly shallow instead of being deep and rounded like the mandolin, and the neck is attached at a slight angle. The tiple is almost unique to Colombia and is said to have been designed to play the bambucos and pasillos of this country. It has the same shape as the guitar but is considerably smaller. It is strung like the bandola except that the middle string of each set is tuned an octave lower than its two partners. It is mostly used for accompaniment or rhythm and chords are strummed with the hand.

A murga is an indispensable feature of any successful picnic or fiesta. Sometimes the group will be composed of members of the party, members of the family or friends or a complete murga will be hired to provide the music for singing and dancing; Colombian folk dances such as the bambuco can be execu-



ted as well on the grassy sward of a river's edge as on a ballroom floor. Even in the more organized groups the members are not professional musicians but work during the day in shops, in the market, or as laborers.

There are two types of murgas. The one which has only the basic instruments - guitar, mandolin and tiple; occasionally two guitars, sometimes two mandolins but rarely more than one tiple. The other based upon the same instruments adds the accordion, maracas, timbales (small double drums played with the fingers), timbas (long bongo drums played with the hands), carrascas or güiros (the long striated gourds which are rubbed with a stick or bone), and sometimes triangles. This adds a whole new percussion section and additions may also be made to the string section by doubling the guitars, mandolins or tiples.

The rural folk generally play the traditional bambucos, pasillos, rumbas, porros, guabinas, boleros, antiguos, bundes Tolimenses and their songs deal with events and people. The enlarged murga is usually found in so-called sophisticated society and the

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emphasis is on rhythm. The favorite selections of the enlarged murgas are mambos (especially for the accordion), porros, botes, modern bambucos, modern boleros, and waltzes.

The murga music recorded here is played by a group of Payanese who call themselves "Melodias Caucañas." They are a "conjunto típico" and play for singing and dancing on any and all occasions. The "conjunto" consists of two bandolas, two guitars, and a tiple, with maracas contributed by a bystander. They are semi-professional musicians. The leader plays the mandolin and designates the numbers to be played, but, although he also plays in a larger dance band with his brother, he works at a non-musical job during the day.

Musical groups called chirimias are found in many parts of Colombia particularly in the Department of Cauca in the Southwest and in the Valle de Pubenza the region around Popayan. The name refers to the Spanish oboe or flageolet which was probably derived from the Moors and dates back at least to the 14th century. It was played with a double reed mouthpiece and had five holes on the upper side, two holes on the lower, and a single hole on the side. Introduced by the Spaniards it is said to be found today in Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. In the group recorded here, and in the others in this area, the chirimia (the instrument) has been replaced by the still older cane or reed flute. (* for illustration of the chirimia see notes to Folkways album FP 15 "Sones of Mexico.")

In spirit, sound, and instrumentation, the chirimia definitely relates to the Indians of this region of the Andes, and may be derived directly from similar groups which are found today among the Guambianos of the Cordillera Central, the Paez of Tierradentro, and the Sibundoy of the Putumayo. In Popayan the players are mestizos or descendants of Indians who have come to live and work in the city. The music is chiefly traditional and there are modern songs and dances composed in traditional form by local musicians. The instruments are percussion: three or four wooden drums of various sizes beaten on leather heads with padded sticks while an unpadded stick is used on the wooden sides; the rasping 'washboard' sound comes from three large guiros or carrascas - large gourds across which many grooves have been cut - a small stick or bone is rubbed rapidly over the grooves and the sound comes out of a hole cut in the neck of the gourd; maracas of various types are usual and one or two triangles completes the rhythm section. Against this array of percussion, the melody is carried by a single reed flute (flauta de carrizo). In the group recorded here the flute is augmented by an ocarina.



In Popayan and surrounding villages the chirimias are heard only during the Christmas season. They are supposed to begin on the night of the Novena, the ninth night before Christmas, but about the middle of November they suddenly appear in the narrow streets and the rhythm of their drums rolls and echoes through the city. Most of the chirimias are boys and they are accompanied by a dancing Diabolo in red costume and fearsome horned mask. He carries a whip to chase the children who shout "Diablo! Diablo!" at him, and a bag to collect coins from listeners and housekeepers who peer from the recessed grilled windows to see what is going on. Chirimia groups play the traditional music for bambucos, pasillos, porros, guabinas and other dances, but more and more they are being replaced by string groups or other instrumental combinations.



The chirimia recorded here is a famous group known as Los Gavilanes (The Sparrow-Hawks). Although most of the groups are made up of boys, Los Gavilanes are adults and they are acknowledged to be the finest Chirimia in Cauca, a reputation in which they take great pride. They say they never practice, but, when the Christmas season arrives, they gather together and play through the streets. Such an adult group is generally given a "trago" of aguardiente rather than coins with the result that their music becomes progressively more energetic.



Side I, Band 1: Marcha Royal. Marches are common even to string groups and are played at fiestas when the dancers take their ladies to refreshments. In dancing to marches the steps are rather like the 'paso doble' but slightly slower and with less accentuated rhythm. Chirimias do not usually have 'official' marches but Los Gavilanes occupy a rather special position in Popayan and are called upon to participate in welcoming ceremonies for visiting dignitaries and other public occasions. At these times the musicians wish to identify themselves - hence the theme song which is recognized by everyone in the Department of Cauca.



Side I, Band 2: Brisas del Pamplonita. This is a popular bambuco which has been imported to this region from the Department of Santander del Norte. With the pasillo the bambuco is probably the most wide spread folk dance in Colombia and each region cherishes its own version. Usually it consists of eight or more figures which depict a flirtation and a conquest. The rhythm here conveys a graphic picture of the short, rapid steps, usually with stamping heels, which are part of this dance. The dancers do not hold each other but circle about, the man with his hands behind his back and the woman with her's on her hips. The body is held almost rigid throughout the complicated pattern of the dance.



Side I, Band 3: La Opera. This piece was composed by Los Gavilanes and is described as a "combination of all rhythms." The drums are heard alone in the opening and are quickly joined by the flute and the ocarina which play a simple melody. The next instruments to enter are the carrascas. Next time through the theme the triangles can be heard and the maracas are finally added. When the group has been completed there is a pause, a signal from the flute, and the music breaks into an energetic and rhythmic merengue.

Side I, Band 4: Perucho Sarria. This is a pasillo, a folk dance popular through most of Colombia but especially in the southern and central parts from the Ecuadorian border up to Antioquia and Boyaca and back down to the jungles of Amazonia. "Perucho" is a nickname for Pedro and this piece is probably in honor of a famous guerilla fighter of the Civil Wars.

Side I, Band 5: Enigma. This is called a "fox Incaico" which possibly means that it is considered to be in fox trot tempo and in the melodic style of the Inca

peoples of Ecuador and Peru. It was written for the group by Maestro Efraim Orozco around an Ecuadorian theme. It is a well known Chirimia number in Cauca and is sometimes known as "El Lamento Indio" (The Indian Lament). It demonstrates well the use of the guiro or carrasca.

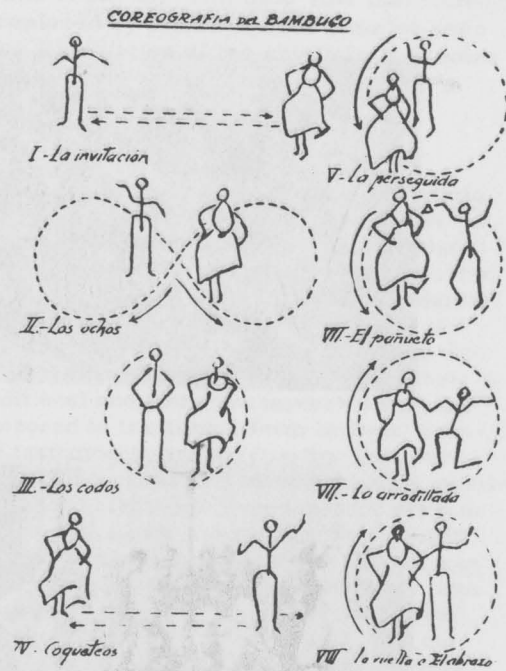
Side II, Band 1: Secreto a Voces. A pasillo by Aristides Mosquera.


Side II, Band 2: El Sotareno Bambuco by Francisco Eduardo Diago.

Side II, Band 3: Beila. A march by Omar Rengifo.

Side II, Band 4: El Rayo-X. A pasillo with a popular title.

Side II, Band 5: Bocaccio. A march.



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Para B. A. Gutiérrez
Jto. Jlio.
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