

RECORDED BY LILIAN MENDELSSOHN

THE

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 8865

MARIIMBA

FROM OAXACA, MEXICO



M
1682
T974
1965

MUSIC LP

TWO MARIMBA BANDS

NINE PIECE BAND

Faustino González Rivera, Director;
 Jesús Moreno Santos; Otilio Perez Arias;
 Manuel Gómez Montecinos; Rubén López
 Aguilera; Porfirio Alvarado Matus;
 Elpidio Ibañez Carillo; Gabriel Clemente
 Trujillo; Bertoldo González Rivera.

LA TORTUGA
 PINOTEPA NACIONAL
 SON DE EJUTLA
 LUCERO DE LA MAÑANA
 EL PANADERO
 SALINA CRUZ
 JUANITA
 FLOR DE PIÑA
 SON FROM POXUTLA

THREE PIECE BAND

Silverio Pastelín Navarro, Director;
 Rufino Martínez; Emilio Balderas.

SAN MARQUENA
 OMETEPEC
 TORTOLITA
 RASCA PETATE
 MICAE LA

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TELEFONOS FROM OAXACA, MEXICO

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. R 65-1750

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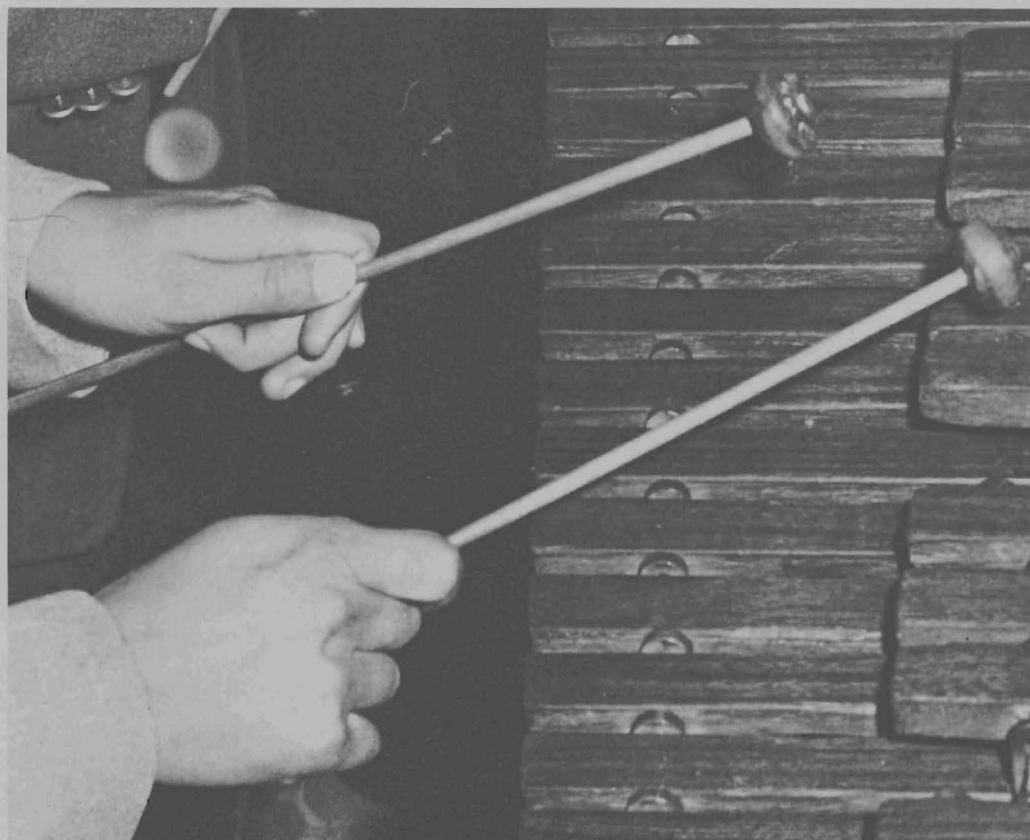
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THE MARIMBA FROM OAXACA, MEXICO



During a period of high cultures, from about A. D. 500 to 1000, the Zapotecs of Oaxaca had their "Golden Age". They constructed their magnificent ceremonial center of Monte Alban which is dramatically situated on a mountain top dominating the city and the valley of Oaxaca. On the terraced mountain, temples and pyramids were constructed on platforms around plazas. Later the Mixtecs fought against the Zapotecs and occupied Monte Alban for some time. The wonderful objects discovered in the famous tomb of Monte Alban in 1931 are witnesses of a highly developed culture and workmanship. These "Jewels of Monte Alban" are now exhibited in the State Museum of Oaxaca and in the Anthropological Museum in Mexico. Strings of pearls and golden beads, turquoise and jade ornaments, exquisitely wrought golden masks, elaborate necklaces of golden beads with little bells can be admired in this collection, and also finely carved deer and jaguar bones, objects of shell, onyx and an extremely beautiful rock-crystal goblet tell about the great artists among the Zapotecs and Mixtecs.

Some centuries later, during a Zapotec Renaissance, the temples and palaces of Mitla were constructed. They are situated in the Valley of Oaxaca. The name Mitla is derived from the Aztec word "mictlan", meaning "Place of the Dead", burial ground for the dead king. The zone has one large mound with a superstructure, and a group of remarkable temples and palaces on platforms surrounding spacious courts. The buildings are adorned with magnificent mosaics of cut stones in scrolls and greques.

The Zapotec calendar, system of writing, religious practices, and arts resemble those of the Mayas but show independent traits. Their early history is lost in myth and speculation, yet there is no uncertainty concerning the greatness of their architecture and plastic arts.

Geographically, the state of Oaxaca is situated in the South-East of Mexico and surrounded by the states of Guerrero, Puebla, Veracruz and Chiapas and its southern part reaches up to the Pacific. The peculiarity of the people, small of stature with faces of very fine cut features, walking proud and erect, the overpowering beautiful color of the trees and flowers and the very special atmosphere of the city, is something to be experienced. The air is vibrating with the soft sound of Zapotec talk and the singing and ringing of the Marimba. On the Alameda, to please their big audience, or for weddings and "fiestas", the Marimba is always the

center of interest, because the interpreters still remember the old beloved melodies of Sones, Chilenas, Fandangos and "little Jarabes".

To the two marimba groups, here presented, we owe the most beautiful old tunes from the state of Oaxaca. The first one is a group of eight men playing on a very large marimba, nearly four meters long. Each man is an artist in his own right. The second group we discovered in a little hut in the outskirts of Oaxaca. Their instrument is small, hardly one meter and a half, and is played by three men. This small marimba has a very special sound, vibrating in an extremely moving way and gives a wonderful savor to the languid, sweet music of Oaxaca.

Now some historical data about the marimba: The marimba of Central America, brought across the Atlantic by the slave trade and its counterparts in Indonesia, the Gambang kayu and the "metallophones" of the Saron and Gender types, is an offspring of the xylophone of Africa, whose ancestry is quite obscure. Stone slabs, found still in actual use in Indochina might possibly throw light on the origin of the Marimba or Xylophone. The players of these tuned stone slabs place them across their thighs just as in few rare cases of xylophone playing in Northern Melanesia, Celebes, Madagascar and Dahomey. The Baoulé Negroes of the Gold Coast are still using a very simple kind of xylophone, made of six bars of very hard wood, graduated in different tones. These six bars are placed on two pieces of outcarved banana trunks and are played with two wooden sticks by each of the two performers. After having been used, this xylophone is destroyed. A similar kind of this primitive xylophone is in use also in Uganda; but in most of the other parts of Africa the xylophone went through a considerable change by adopting, below each bar one gourd which serves as a sounding-board. The frame with the bars and the gourds is mounted on a wooden support with legs, the bars arranged piano like and the players standing in front of the instrument. The marimba is a deep-toned xylophone with a range of from three to four octaves, sounding one octave lower than the four-octave xylophone. The bars rest on strips of felt or rubber and are made of rosewood, which gives a brilliant tone and is very durable. It is played with soft headed beaters. If a note goes out of tune, the pitch of the bar is sharpened by reducing its length slightly. Octagonal wooden tubes serve as amplifiers fixed below the bars with strings, which are used as well to arrange a note out of tune.

NINE MEN BAND:

La Tortuga - The Turtle (Son from the Isthmus): very old song from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, tropical region near the Pacific.

Pinotepe Nacional (Chilena from Oaxaca): name of a region near the border of Guerrero, where the cultures of Mixtecs, Negroes and Triques meet. The "Chilena" heard here is very typical for this region, showing the strong Negro influence in rhythm.

Son de Ejutla (Son from Oaxaca): named after a little town in the State of Oaxaca, this song is very old and anonymous.

Lucero de la Mañana - Morningstar (Old Son from the Isthmus): song from the Isthmus, the author of which is unknown.

El Panadero - The Flatterer (Dance from Oaxaca): the "little Jarabe" is a very attractive dance. The foot movements are lively and gracious and show the Spanish influence. The real meaning of the title of this dance - El Panadero - is, among the people: somebody who flatters someone else to obtain a favor.

Salina Cruz (Old Vals from the Isthmus): old vals which bears the name of a town in the Isthmus region on the coast of the Pacific.

Juanita (Chilena from Oaxaca)

Flor de Piña - Pineapple Flower: (Son from the Isthmus):

Son from Poxutla (Oaxaca): named after a town situated near the Costa Chica of Oaxaca, a region where several cultures meet.

Faustino Gonzalez Rivera, Director; Jesús Moreno Santos; Otilio Perez Arias; Manuel Gómez Montecinos; Rubén Lopez Aguilar; Porfirio Alvarado Matus; Elpidio Ibañez Carillo; Gabriel Clemente Trujillo; Bertoldo Gonzalez Rivera.

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THREE MEN BAND:

San Marqueña (Chilena from Oaxaca): typical music from the tropics and as such well known, played and sung, in all the coastal states from Oaxaca to Veracruz.

Ometepec: (Song from Oaxaca-Guerrero Coast):

Tortolita - Little Dove (Vals from Oaxaca).

Rasca Petate - Make the best of Everything (Dance from Oaxaca): the literal translation is: "scratching the mat"; but the popular meaning: make the best of everything". - This is a "little Jarabe" dance Oaxaca.

Micaëla (Son from the Isthmus): song played and sung for every occasion where there is a "fiesta" in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

Silverio Pastelín Navarro, Director;
Rufino Martinez; Emilio Balderas.



The big Marimba with 9 men on the board is recorded - the first 6 pieces - in a garage and the last 3 on the Alameda of Oaxaca. The program has been worked out specially for the occasion. The second group are 3 men on a small, primitive marimba and is recorded in a hut in the outskirts of Oaxaca, where children, chickens etc. are coming and going constantly.



The "son" is a certain rhythm of the typical music. In general a "son" has three different movements, in tempo, which makes them so attractive and lively.

