Music of the Indians of Panama
The Cuna (Tule) and Chocoe (Embera) Tribes
SIDÉ 1  Music from the San Blas Islands, Island of Río Tigre, Kuna Yaqa
Band 1: Camú Burwi—Flute Music 9:52
Noká 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: Camú Suid—Inna Suid 3:20
Incantation for Girls Puberty rite

SIDÉ 2  Music of the Chocoe (Emběra) of the Darien Province, Yeviza and Corazal
Band 1: Bastica—Flute and Drum Music 1:52
Río Chico—Corazal
Band 2: Nomina—Flute and Drum composition 3:42
Igoral Olía, Chorí Séro, Cútor Ñátor & Demitio Apochito
Band 3: Aro Ruha 4:46
Band 4: Spirit Invocation—Chocoe Shaman 3:00
or Jeibana (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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Music of the Indians of Panama
The Cuna (Tule) and Chocoe (Emběra) Tribes
Recorded and Annotated by DAVID BLAIR STIFFLER

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Padre Mario Arias
Victor Vidal
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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4326
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 applique, 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 stranger refused past the zero hour, whatever happened to him was his own fault. Strict rules as well apply to the Cuna themselves. For a San Blas woman was to become familiar with an outsider she was supposed to be given the death penalty as well as her offsprung 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 a barrier against a mass invasion from the southern countries of the continent, which are familiar with an outsider was supposed to be given the death penalty as well as her offsprung child. In this way the islanders sought to maintain purity of their race and culture.

But last 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 role 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 medicines, 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 leveled stone houses located at the tops of mountains, under the sea, and under the layers of the earth. The souls of human beings are addressed and glorified in songs both the spiritual and the plural (it is the abduction of ones soul or Purha that causes illness).

Nuchus are carved wooden figures or effigies occupying a position in every Cuna 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-woven 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 woman'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 dependent upon ones mood or deadline. (Certain pieces are commissioned by outsiders or tourists.) Prices range anywhere from pence 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, head dress and anklet bracelets, composed of many strands of patterned glass beads, golden breast mantas and necklaces made of the teeth of Janurus 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 Paldw ISUS -- meaning "chicks 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 "Choco" Indians is that of painting the body with "Jaugua", a plant producing a transparent ink that later turns into a dark blue-black color. It is applied to 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.

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 over the main house. When the land has been cleared it becomes private and a family can produce such crops as bananas, plantains, corn, rice, yams, sweet manioc, sugarcane and coconuts, which is the main cash crop of the Cuna. The men do the farming (by the slash and burn method), the women do the cleaning and the men do the fishing. 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 dependent upon ones mood or deadline. (Certain pieces are commissioned by outsiders or tourists.) Prices range anywhere from pence 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.)

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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 woman who owns 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 make 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 make them think that it is he who is ailing.

Light-skinned white Albino children or "Moon Children" (offspring of the mother's hammock). When the flutes are played they will take the place of wedding gifts and must last a long time. 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 hump 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 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's 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. There 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 can of 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 mesomyc 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. 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 all humanity "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. How 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. Melos in Cuna and Talamanas in Choce for the purpose of eliciting 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

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 orientations as to its future role in Cuna society. The lullaby is also one medium for female vocal
Rituals: Healing and Cycle of Life

There are several ceremonies and festivities that still are practiced by the Cuna that have not been overpowered 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 Heleos or shamans (spirit healers) to summon the help of benevolent spirits to aid in the process of healing. Gandures who are the official singers at the puberty rites, are also men.

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

Healing for the Cuna depends on a number of factors: music, prayers, devices of spiritual assistance and botanical knowledge of roots, leaves and bark. 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 Hougan make use of Pre-Columbian Celts or Aheheads found in the ground, they are called Pierre Loe or "Belle Pierre" (Spirit Stones or beautiful stones) in Nicargua and Honduras they are called by the Mixkito and Sumu Indians "Thunder stones" and are thought to be lightning bolts. (Consemi). According to Wilfredo Morris who sings this particular prayer called "Aquanusa" stresses the importance and function of the stones alone 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 Hele 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 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 Hele 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, unknown to the individual. At any rate the individual becomes ill. It is now the job of the Shaman or curandero or Hele 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 one's spirit was abducted. The Aquanusa is directed by the oration of the Shaman. As the person lays in the harwonch, 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 "Hiyakan" employed as fetishes protecting them against the bad spirits. The Tule (Cuna) Indians insist that these stone objects fall from the sky.

Test of Oration

Band 4 Kahiber (pigante chicas) Aquanusa

(spelling and text by Wilfredo Morris)

iba ula cana, aido yu yu bali, tic nele di peca chu sunbacanadi siyeye nasa cuale.

a special stone in the river.

Nele masa casiale akua nele kuna ca nele na pedula ienanali.

It was placed by God in the bottom of the river (to be used when one is ill?)

yawquilagyu pedu palachi nuca bi etarwa bi ya paqui lagua pedul uiiuque mai

beani chenu be mape mai

bancchi maei lusali mapae mai

The child is suffering

The child is trembling in the harwonch, all of the cords of the ropes in the harwonch are shaking

(saying a prayer to the Akua musa to help the child)
The child is suffering in his hammock we would like you to help

Another important prayer is sung by the Nene for a pregnant woman when she is having labor pains or a difficult birth. It is called 'Ma Fpd'.

The Nene 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 charged by the Neles for his services, such as eight coconuts)

Text for the Inna Suid

For this Ordain, the Gandurs 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 will be split up into three parts each containing 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.

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 Choco 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 Espera River. They are basically a nomadic people but have established permanent residences in various locations. There are two distinct dialects of the Choco in Panama, they are the Segusa and the Umanua.

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 Kukua, a bottom feeding scaly fish that they harpoon with a simple pointed steel rod with the use of a diving mask, as well as for crayfish and planas 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, pecariers, 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 Ilolate 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 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 "parana". The men, although their dress has changed lately, wear pants and shirts. Some of the older men, especially the Jilahana or Shamans 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 Corosal 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 slates hung nearby.) The Jaibana will exercise 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 Choco music in this album was recorded in the Darien Jungle at two locations, Yaviza and Corosal. 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 Chucumque 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 of 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, Latin from Panama and Colombia. 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.

Corosal 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 Choco into the consumer society.

Until recently the Choco have been able to defend and preserve their way of life by retreatin further into the jungle, but as the non-autochthonous cultures push in and a rapid commercialization of the Indians 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 Choco) Duke p.345

The Choco music 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 Choco, divided among two distinct dialects: the Waunana or the Wauna or the Waunana with a population of 2,500 and the Embera or Embara 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 geometric 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 seen on their colorful jerseys.

For the recording at Corosal, which I thought would be something on the order of the traditional circular dance as described by Kriger in 1926, in terms of context, I was sadly disappointed. Ritualized drum music and singing had been replaced by Latinized Merengue music enhanced by a sound system. (Amplifier, microphone, speakers and electric base guitar. Electrical current was supplied by an 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 acquired, save for their "festive attitude" assisted by several trays of "aguadiente".

Among the rafters of his breezy wind blown home sided hut, situated high above the Rio Chico, Doncito Apostico 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. Temperatures 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 anger's 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 that 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 Choco Indian would soon find its way upstream to Corosal.

"Mantab Subee" -was Four Healing Prayer-Spiritual Innovation

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 who's role it is to maintain a connection between the community at large and the spiritual realm. That person is the shaman or the Jainbana 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 Cayooya 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 Duna in Wauna which is a 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 shaman's night vision by stimulating the eyes and nose and recently 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 ovation, 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) for several times the microphone that I was using was affected by the wind produced by the shaking of the palm leaves, causing a noise boom.
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 Oheoa - Skin and wood drum  
Choris Cero - metal flute  
Del'sletio Apochito - Plastic bucket Drum

Band Two - "Nomina" - same as band one

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

Band Four - "Montah Gubese" Sung in conjunction with healing ritual by Choco Shamans - Jabinha

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

Band Six - "Remember me to the Ancient Tines" - Demetio Apochito  
A possible reference to the ancestral spirits give my regards to the ancestors, 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 - Accordian  
Didimu -small snare drum  
Jose - "Tunhero" congo drum  
Roman- "Chirruca" Gourd Scraper  
Abril - "Baso" - Base guitar  
Cholo - Animador

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