LOWLAND TRIBES OF ECUADOR
## LOWLAND TRIBES OF ECUADOR

### SIDE ONE

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

### SIDE TWO

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

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Special thanks to the following for making this album possible:
F. E. DeMARCO, RICHARD DRUJT; MARIA CRANE, EDISON TERAN, TIM DUFFY, HOWARD ROWER and ECUATORIANA AIRLINES.

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ECUATORIANA
the airline of all the Americas

LOWLAND TRIBES OF ECUADOR

Recorded by DAVID BLAIR STIFFLER

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4375
LOWLAND TRIBES OF ECUADOR
Recorded by DAVID BLAIR STIFFLER

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.

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 earlobe 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.
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 seems 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 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 "Narcanal 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.

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, 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 signify extraction and capture of the malignant spirit essence.

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.

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 cabaret 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 Coloradoș, 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 archetypal "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.

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 hymnals and religious observance.

CREDITS

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR MAKING THIS ALBUM POSSIBLE: F. E. DeMARCO, RICHARD DRUITT, MARIA CRANE, EDISON TERAN, TIM DUFFY, HOWARD ROWER AND ECUATORIANA AIRLINES

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Who are the Waorani. Summer Institute of Linguistics
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