FOLK SONGS AND DANCES
OF BOLIVIA
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Recorded in Bolivia

Compiled and edited with dance instructions by Ronnie and Stu Lipner

Photographs from the personal collection of Ronnie and Stu Lipner and through the courtesy of Mr. Cornelio Hidalgo of the Bolivian Consulate.

Bolivia is a land of beauty and barren grandeur. Small in population, it had two capitals and a lake that is higher than most mountains. Lake Titicaca, at an altitude of more than 12,000 feet, is the highest navigable body of water in the world. Boats built of bundles of Totora reeds, called balsas, have plied these waters for thousands of years and contrast strangely with modern steamships.

Wearing light tan derbies on their heads at all times, the women are clothed in bright wool mantas, fastened with a huge pin over their shoulders for warmth, with usually another manta over this, drapped to hold the baby, papoose fashion, and under a heavy circular skirt, four or five varicolored petticoats. The men dress in ponchos worn over short, homespun pants, while on their heads they wear woven, rainbow-hued, helmet shaped caps with earflaps. Sandals worn are usually fashioned of raw leather.

The majority of the Bolivian Indians are either Quechua or Aymara; Aborigines in the eastern part of the country bear no kinship to either of these two peoples.

BOLIVIA, THE COUNTRY, ITS MUSIC AND DANCES

by Ronnie and Stu Lipner

The majority of Bolivian Dances do not derive their name from the rhythmic or musical structure or from the specific character of their Choreography. They are named for the locality in which they are danced, the religious celebration to which they are dedicated, or any other source completely foreign. Different names may designate dances similar in form, or the same name may be used for two different dances.

FOLK MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTS

The instruments that comprise a typical Bolivian Dance Orchestra are:

a - Charango - an instrument made from the Armadillo Shell.

b - Quena - A reed flute containing many sizes and shapes.

c - Sicu - The Panflute.

d - Anata - The large version of the Quena.

e - Caja - A small Drum.

f - Bombo - A Large Drum.

The PANDILLA DE ANATAS is a group of musicians who play the Anatas, Charango & Bombo. Many valleys in the southern part of Bolivia have their own "Pandilla". During the holidays and Carnavals, they go through the village streets playing all sorts of dances.

The basic music form is the YARAVI, sung in slow tempo. Its text is elegiac in character and may take various forms. Every inn has a guitar player who sings Yaravis and Tristes, (Sad Songs). The Llanto, Estilo & Vidala are all other forms derived from Yaravis.

ADORATION - The Adorationes are religious songs. They correspond to our Christmas Carols. They are always dedicated to the Child Jesus and are sung on Christmas Eve in front of the Traditional manger.

CACHARPAYA - The word comes from the Quechua word, meaning to say good-bye. The name Cacharpaya is also given to the last round of a dance. This dance is not perfectly defined in form from a musical standpoint. It is usually part of the festivities that close the Carnaval Season, and may take the form of a Cueva, Bailecito or a Fox Trot.

TRISTE - Triste and Llanto are the Spanish names for the Yaravi; they are love songs, having no definite form, rhythmic patterns vary and the texts frequently combine indigenous and Spanish words.
FORMATION & STEP USED.

A double line of dancers, M on one side, W on the other. (M's back to center), all at one end of dance area. About 8 couples in a group should participate, no more than 10 is advisable. Women hold in their R hands a knotted handkerchief, (Optional) Man the same. If used, it is twirled throughout the dance, overhead in a Ccw direction. Basic step used, is a running trot in time to the music. Feet are close together, group stays together, rather than cover ground with long steps. Introduction is played, and dance starts. Partners hands are joined across the lines. (M's R with W's L, M's L with W's R.)

The amount of musical measures to be used for each figure should be pre-determined. Some of the figures may be omitted, but should always include the Snake in and out figure at the end.

FIGURES TO BE DANCED.

1 - Partners step twd each other, and away from each other, then run around in place with R shoulders adjacent. 8 Meas.
Repeat stepping twd. and away from each other, and run around in place with L shoulders adjacent. Repeat this figure again.
(1 Meas. to pull in, 1 Meas. to pull away, 2 Meas. to run around.)

2 - Group joins inside hands (M's R, W's L), and twirling handkerchiefs, group runs around the room one time to end up in a circle. Men place their partners on their Right side in a single circle, all face in.

3 - One couple at a time enter the center of the ring, and dance to the delight of the others. This couple can improvise as they see fit. Examples, Hook R elbows, and run around, Hook L elbows and run around. Man does a Tap Step., (See instructions for Cucuc), while women twirls in place first to R, then to L. Both couples can do Tap step, W more sedately, M with vigor. Others in circle clap their hands to the music, and encourage the dancing couple. Each couple gets a chance to dance in the middle, they try to out-do each other.
4. All women step to the middle and twirl in place first to L then to R, Men stamp their feet and tap their hands, or perform Zapateo steps. (idea is that they are impressed with the women twirling around, but they will not be out done).

5. After the last couple has performed in the middle, all joins hands in a single circle, and run to the center and back. Repeat the running toward the center and away.

6. In a single circle all run toward the Left, then toward the Right. Circle then breaks into couples, where W twirl again to M’s delight, while M perform Tap steps.

7. In a single circle again, all run around to the R. A pre-designated person breaks away with his partner’s hand and starts winding up the circle in a snake fashion. He winds it up real tight.

8. Leader then turns to his Right, and then proceeds to un-wind the circle, others following in close formation. After snake is un-wound, couples form again, and run around the room, following lead couple, who now are together, and lead off the floor to finish dance.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

The above figures described are just a few of the many performed. As many as 70 couples can partake in a Huayno, and the time element is completely forgotten. The musicians usually play in the center of a ring, and have to be careful when the snake figure is danced. Band #1, contains slow and fast tempos, to use this very delightful melody, just arrange your figures accordingly. Band #2 and #3, the tempo remains constant. A great deal of leeway is given all who dance. Knotted handkerchief is twirled whenever free hand is free. Men dance with vigor, Women dance sedate and shy.
BAILECITO

SIDE II, Band 1.

A dance for 2 couples, M on one side, their partners on the other, facing each other. In the right hand is carried a handkerchief, which is twirled above the head in a CCW direction.

Basic step is a Two-Step waltz, 3 steps for each measure of music. The first step is taken fwd, the next 2 steps are done in place. All start with Left Foot. Introduction is played, dance is started when called "Adentro" (Start).

Figure

1. Partners perform a Dos-A-Doe figure for 8 Meas. of music. (Move fwd, twirling handkerchiefs, passing back to back, on L side, and back to place. 8 Meas. in all.

2. Partners perform a Dos-A-Dos figure for 8 Meas. of Music passing on the RIGHT side this time, back to back, then backing up to place, twirling handkerchiefs, high overhead. 8 Meas. in all.

3. Partners turn around in place and bow, (Back to Back) 2 Meas.

4. Partners face and bow. 2 Meas.

5. Each person in set, makes a little circle in his place to the LEFT, twirling handkerchiefs, 4 Meas.

6. Partners change places, twirling handkerchiefs, (4 Meas.) than approach each other for 3 more measures twirling handkerchiefs vigorously, and at last beat place handkerchiefs on each other's shoulders. (Entire action takes 7 measures and 1 beat.)

Introduction is played again and at the call "Adentro", dance is repeated again. After second time, introduction is played again, the call to start is heard, and dancers perform the dance for a third time.

SICURIS DANCE

SIDE II, Band 2.

In South America the bird considered to be the king of all birds is the Condor. As in the United States the Eagle reigns supreme, so the Condor reigns in the Andes. Indians worship and have many social events in its honor. The Condor is symbolic of a good spirit that keeps evil spirits away.

This is one of several Sicuris Dances, in honor of the Condor. The dancer wears a desicated condor over his body, and the head over his face. In festivals, he acts as a clown chasing the bad spirits, and harassing the people present.

Sicuris dancers are also hired for weddings to start the newlyweds on their way to a happy life.
The dance can be staged as in the Huayno, allowing for the Sicuris Dancer to partake, in a solo lasting for as many measures, as necessary. Here he clowns around, improvising steps and turns as he does. He also harasses people in the group, the people giving way to his wishes. Then he exits with a grand flourish, the people continuing with the dance.

There are several Sicuris Dances in Bolivia as well as in the neighboring country of Peru.

**LA CUECA**

SIDE II, Band 3.

The Cuesca comprises a group of handkerchief dances in which the handkerchief is used as a means of flirtation. During the dance the partners never touch each other; a great deal of leeway is given them to express their feelings.

**FORMATION**

Partners standing about 8 feet apart. In the R. hand is a handkerchief which is twirled high overhead in a CCW direction. All start with L. foot. A suggested sequence of the Cuesca is given; several other types exist. In Peru, this dance is known as Marinera. In Argentina & Chile, The Cuesca is an important dance tempo, and is played slightly different.

**BASIC STEP USED**

A two-step waltz, 3 steps to the measure. This is one of several steps used in the Cuesca. Introduction is played, dance starts when singing starts.

**DANCE**

1 - Using the basic step and waving handkerchief, partners circle each other in a complete 360 degree circle. 8 Meas.
2 - Partners advance twd each other,  
   2 Meas. 
3 - Partners retreat from each other,  
   2 Meas. 
4 - Partners advance twd each other,  
   2 Meas. 
   Partners retreat from each other,  
   2 Meas. 
5 - ZEPATEO, partners in place perform the following Tap step. Women sedately, Men with Vigor. Both start with same foot.

a - Step L in place
b - Strike Heel of R foot, then Toe of R.

c - Quickly Step L then R in place. & Pause. (A,B,C, takes 1 Meas.)
d - Strike Heel of L foot, then Toe of L.
e - Quickly step R, then L in place. (1 Meas.)

Perform Tap Step for 4 Measures of music. Hands are held normally along the sides.

6 - Repeat #3 again.  
   4 Meas.
7 - Repeat #4 again  
   2 Meas. Fwd, 
   2 Meas. Bwd.
8 - Repeat Zepateo Again  
   4 Meas.
9 - Repeat #3 again  
   4 Meas.
10 - Repeat #4 again  
   2 Meas. Fwd,  
   2 Meas. Bwd.

11 - Finish the dance, by partners approaching each other, turning to eachs Left, and ending together. At the last beat of music, place handkerchiefs over own L shoulder, and face downward.

Call for second time is heard, introduction is played, and at the call ADENTRO, repeat entire dance again.

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**LA LLAMERADA**

SIDE II, Band 4.

La Llamerada is a festival resembling in some ways the "HUAYNO", and can be danced in that way. Note its similarity to Huyno Hirpastay. It is basically a round dance performed by Men, and in the figures comes a sort of a contest of skill to see which man will be the best dancer of the group: the contest will go on until the best if chosen.

The dance can be performed as in the Huyno, except that when it is time for couples to enter the ring, each man will take his turn and improvise as he will.

This cannot be considered a routine dance, one rather, to be especially staged at festivals, parties etc.
"Danza del llamero", a typical dance contest held during certain holidays in La Paz.