

ONLINE AUDIO GUIDE 5.5

GUATEMALAN MARIMBA MUSIC

title: “Los Trece” (The Thirteen)

subgenre: guarimba

performing forces: two marimbas (with seven players), string bass, drum kit (played by members of Chapinlandia)

composer: Wotzbelí Aguilar

form: free, with contrasting sections (A A, B, B1, C, C)

function: public performance, possibly at a party; expression of identity

source: *Chapinlandia: Marimba Music of Guatemala* (Smithsonian Folkways SFW CD 40542, 2007)

Listen for:

- timbre
- charleo (buzz)
- symmetrical phrases, often of eight bars
- compound meter
- sesquiáltera
- changes of tonal center
- variations in melody
- chromatic scale

Don't be concerned if you don't hear the changes of tonal center. Do, however listen for the chromatic scale, identified below. Again, the uppercase letters indicate sectional divisions and the lowercase letters the phrases within each section.

Timing	Structure	What happens
00:00	Introduction	establishes key
00:09	A	new tonal center main melody introduced roll in marimba, as will be frequent at ends of phrases sesquiáltera sesquiáltera
00:13	(a)	
00:18	(b)	
00:21	(a)	
00:27	(b)	
00:27	repeat of A	
00:46	B	new melodic idea, with upbeat
	(c)	

00:55	(d)	prominent rolls in marimba sesquiáltera
1:04	(c)	
1:13	(d)	sesquiáltera cadence
1:22	(c)	new notes added to melody enhanced accompaniment
1:33	(d)	sesquiáltera
1:41	(c)	with new notes in melody and enhanced accompaniment
1:50	(d)	sesquiáltera rolls on the marimba at higher pitch than previously
1:58		final chord of section repeated for emphasis
1:59	Interlude	chromatic motion
2:04		descending chromatic scale, concludes with a “choked” cymbal
2:09	(e)	new melodic idea, with second half of phrase a sequence of first half (compare 2:09 and 2:13) cymbal at end of phrase material from introduction returns
2:19	(e)	material from introduction returns again, cadence on B flat
2:25		
2:36	repeat of C	final cadence

Consider:

- Do performances such as these, with drum kit and upright bass, enhance the folkloric tradition—however it may be understood in Guatemala—or do they do it a disservice?
- How do you characterize the charleo?
- What is the overall effect of one symmetrical phrase followed by another?
- How does Aguilar offset the chromatic scale, that is, what comes before it and what follows it?