

## ONLINE AUDIO GUIDE 5.11

### MÚSICA LLANERA

**title:** “Llanero, sí, soy llanero” (Yes, I am a plainsman)

**performing forces:** members of Grupo Cimarrón: male voice (Wilton Games Balcárel), cuatro (Pedro Libardo Rey Rojas), maracas (Omar Edgar Fandiño Ramírez), string bass (Ricardo Albino Zapata Barrios), harp (Carlos Rojas Hernández)). To simulate the traditional bandola, the harpist has damped the strings of the instrument to imitate the bandola’s dry picking

**language:** Spanish

**subgenre:** pajarillo

**form:** strophic, freely modified

**function:** performance, informal enjoyment; expression of llanero (male) identity

**source:** *Joropo Music from the Orinoco Plains of Colombia* (Smithsonian Folkways CD 40515, 2004)

#### Listen for:

- Phrygian sonority (opening chord)
- minor mode
- ending on half cadence
- brief melodic patterns, repeated in instruments and voice
- penetrating vocal quality, frequently in a high register (passages marked with an “x” lie high in the voice, contrasting with lower-pitched melodic fragments, which are not marked)
- syllabic setting
- abundance of text
- intensification in second verse (see below)

Timing	Structure and text	What happens, English translation
00:00	Introduction	Repeated Phrygian chord in cuatro, followed by melodic fragments
	golpe con leco	percussive strumming
00:17	¡Ay!	bass instruments mark harmony, establish instrumental accompaniment
		sustained cry, in a single breath, sings over the melodic fragments, which continue and lead to . . .
00:24	Verse 1	
	Llanero, sí, soy llanero, primo,	A plainsman, yes, I am a man of the plains
	x y el que quiera comprobarlo	and he who wants to prove it
	x que vaya pa’ mi llanura y pregunte en la	should go to the plains
	costa el Pauto*	and ask on the banks of the Pauto River
	como aprendí desde niño	how I learned, as a boy,
	x a dominar un potranco,	to break a colt
	x a ponerle el reja a un toro,	to tie up a bull

	<p>a cogé' un novillo po' el tallo, a patroneá' una curiara x en las crecientes de Mayo, x a conocer el aguaje del pescao' grande en el charco y la astucia del caimán x velando altivo en el paso,</p> <p>x al chigüire* lateperro zumbarse al río del barranco, al grito madrugador del caporal en el hato.</p> <p>Me acuesto al zumbarse el sol y con el sol me levanto, con trinos de guacharaca y quejíos de un araguato, algarabía de chenchena* en los rebalses del caño, x y dentro del monte oscuro el ronquío de un tigre macho.</p>	<p>to grab a young bull by the tail, to skipper a boat in the rising May waters, to learn the ways of the big fish in the water and the cunning of the alligator watching haughtily nearby,</p> <p>and the chigüire lateperro jumping into the river from the cliff at the morning shout of the herdsman in the camp.</p> <p>I go to bed with the sun and I rise with the sun with the trilling of the guacharaca bird and the cries of the howling monkey, the twittering of the chenchena where the torrent dams up and in the dark brush, the growl of a male tiger (notice how singer growls on the word "tigre," or tiger).</p>
<p>1:20</p> <p>2:08</p>	<p>Instrumental interlude</p>	<p>in cuatro, varied strums</p> <p>new patterns interact with melody notes</p> <p>slapped ("ripped") strings</p>
<p>2:32</p> <p>2:39</p>	<p>golpe con leco</p> <p>¡Ay!</p> <p>Verse 2</p> <p>Llanero, sí, soy llanero, primo,</p> <p>x criollito como el mastranto, x dulce como miel de abeja y amargo como el barbasco,* puro como un manantial, x recio como sol de Marzo, x caballicero y mensual peón de sabana pa' rato, críao' entre bosta y ganao', x sogá, cabresto y caballo, x puntero en sabana abierta cuando no tenía quince años.</p> <p>Cuántos rodeos ajilé x con la melodía del canto, x cuantas travesías eché</p>	<p>again, in a single breath</p> <p>¡Ay! A plainsman, yes, I am a man of the plains, as criollo as the native aromatic plants as sweet as the bee's honey and bitter as the barbasco as pure as the spring as strong as the March sun, a horseman and peón of the plains, paid by the month, for a while, growing up amid manure and livestock, lasso, harness, and horse, a marksman on the open plains when I was not yet fifteen.</p> <p>How many skirmishes I negotiated with the melody of song, how many scrapes I got into</p>

	<p>con el casco e' mi caballo, trochas de noches oscuras palabreando los espantos, x noches de luna fiestera con el cariño de un cuatro oyendo guaruras* tristes x de un canoero en el paso.</p>	<p>with my cowboy hat and my horse, following trails in the dead of night cussing out my bad spirits, nights of the festive moon with the caress of a cuatro listening to the cry of the melancholy flute of a canoer passing by.</p> <p>In the next part, the singer starts off in a high range but then inserts a series of lower- pitched melodic fragments not present in the first verse.</p>
3: 33	<p>x Fue así que este corazón se formó en el llano amplio, altivo como el pitío' del toro en un bajún bajo, noble como el coleador que acaricia su caballo, sin rencores por la vida por lo mucho que ella ha dado:</p> <p>una mujé, una familia y allá en mi sabana un rancho. Y esta garganta coplera repleta de orgullo nato pa' gritá a los cuatro vientos cada vez que me embarbasco:</p>	<p>It was thus that this heart came to be, in this broad plain, proud as the whistle of the bull of the lowlands, noble as a cattle-roper who pats his horse tenderly, without rancor toward life for all that it has given him:</p> <p>a wife, a family and there, on my plains, a ranch. And this coplero's throat filled with native pride ready to sing to the four winds each time I am so moved:</p>
3:53	<p>x Llanero, sí, soy llanero de las sabanas del Pauto.</p>	<p>Plainsman, yes, I'm a plainsman from the plains of the Pauto River.</p>
		ends on half cadence

### Translation notes

The Pauto River, part of the Orinoco basin, is in Colombia.

A *chigüire* is species of rodent, among the largest in the world.

A chenchena is a plumed bird found in Venezuela and Colombia.

Barbasco is a plant indigenous to the Americas and contains poisonous chemical compounds.

A guarura is a large snail, native to parts of Venezuela. It emits a sound and is the material used for the musical instrument mentioned in this selection.

The author thanks Víctor Márquez for extensive assistance with the English translation.

### Consider:

- What is the effect of the sudden higher-pitched vocal line at 2:32? How do the golpes con leco frame the selection?

- How do the words suggest that the singer is more than just a “tough guy?” What do you make of the frequent references to music in the text?
- What is the effect of the (a) rapid, syllabic declamation throughout and (b) the “extra” melodic insertions in the middle of verse 2 (at 3:33)?
- Why might this selection end on a half cadence?