



South America and Mexico: The Amazon Rainforest, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico

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Established by the ancient Incas in Peru at least by the thirteenth century, Machu Picchu, a ruined city at 9,000 feet/2740 meters in the Andes Mountains, was forgotten following the Spanish conquest in the early sixteenth century and only rediscovered in 1911 (M. Tyler Rounds)



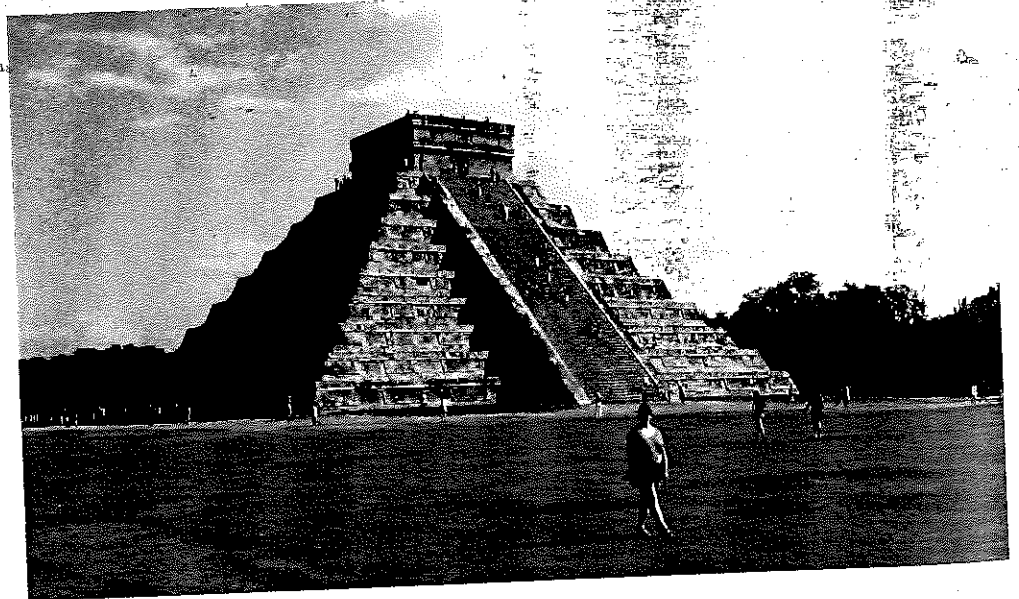
Background Preparation

In the Western hemisphere, Central and South America, as well as Mexico, are frequently overshadowed by the global attention given to the United States. While tourism is increasing steadily, most travelers choose the United States or islands of the Caribbean for their vacation destinations. Many areas south of the U.S. border are still regarded as "developing," but many great cities in these areas are quite cosmopolitan and as highly developed as cities in the United States and Europe. The region also boasts some of the world's most beautiful natural wonders, such as the Amazon—the largest river in the world—and its surrounding rainforests (mostly in Brazil); Angel Falls (Venezuela), the highest waterfall in the world; and the Andes Mountains, second only to the Himalayas in peak height and the longest system of high mountains in the world, running all along the western coast of South America.

While the generally accepted theory is that the indigenous populations of the Americas crossed from Asia, recent archaeological evidence indicates that there were people living in modern Brazil some 30,000 to 50,000 years ago and in Chile and Venezuela roughly 13,000 years ago. Though little can be said for certain regarding the activities of these earliest inhabitants, the ancient empires of the Western hemisphere, namely the Maya, Aztec, and Inca empires, are better known and continue to influence the cultural identity of the present populations of Mexico, Central, and South America. Remnants of these ancient civilizations are visited by thousands of tourists every year, and archaeologists work tirelessly to uncover clues to the cultural activities of these early indigenous peoples. Evidence of advanced knowledge in astronomy, mathematics, and agriculture, as well as of highly structured political and religious systems, dates to as early as 200 B.C.E. and suggests that at their peak each empire may have rivaled those of ancient China or Rome.

Spanish conquerors, however, put an end to the development of these civilizations soon after Christopher Columbus "discovered" the New World in 1492 C.E. Coupled with the

Perhaps Mexico's most famous Mayan ruin, the pyramid at Chichen Itza was begun about 900 C.E. and testifies to the advanced technological development of this early civilization (Andrew Shahriari)





In Cusco, Peru, the Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús in the Plaza de Armas was built in the late 1570s and rebuilt later after an earthquake. Its large plaza is where festivals including music and dance occur frequently (Max T. Miller)

military conquests of the Spanish conquistadors, Old World diseases—such as smallpox and measles—decimated many indigenous populations who had no biological resistance to the foreign diseases. Throughout the region, Roman Catholic missionaries found fertile ground in which to establish new churches. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Spaniards had settled in far-reaching areas of North, Central, and South America that have since grown into some of today's largest cities, such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Lima, and Buenos Aires.

In addition to subjugating native peoples, Spanish and Portuguese colonialists also brought many African slaves to the Americas to work in gold and silver mines, to raise cattle, and to farm plantations growing crops such as tobacco and sugarcane. Other European colonialists followed suit, and brought with them laborers from other colonized countries such as India and Indonesia, while the French transferred many prisoners to the region. Because of this, many areas of South America today, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana in particular, reveal strong cultural connections with non-European peoples. Eastern coastal areas, especially in Brazil, are densely populated with peoples of mixed African and Iberian ancestry (*mulattos*), while Central America and much of the interior of South America comprise mainly indigenous populations, many of whom also have Spanish ancestry (those of mixed ancestry are known as *mestizos*). The rainforests of Brazil remained largely immune to the influx of foreigners until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rapid deforestation in the 1980s led to increased interest in the protection of wildlife and the preservation of the traditional lifeways of the many indigenous Amazonian tribes.

The musical activities of the diverse peoples of Central and South America reflect these historical interactions. Indigenous populations in the rainforests and in rural areas of the Andes preserve musical traditions believed to predate the arrival of Columbus. Music found

in urban areas reveals influences from Europe, specifically Spain and Portugal, as well as West Africa.

Planning the Itinerary

The music of Central and South America, and of Mexico (geographically part of North America), comprises three major ingredients: Indigenous traditions, European-derived music, and African-inspired musical activity. The music of the Amazonian tribes and Andean rural communities dates to pre-Columbian times and has presumably remained little changed for centuries. Spanish influence is felt in numerous music traditions, especially those found in urban areas. African influence can be seen in the survival of African secular and religious practices, the creation of new instruments modeled after African ones, and in the use of musical traits, such as polyrhythm, commonly associated with various ethnic groups from Africa.

Martin Pereira Algarita

We created the ensemble "Impromptus" in 1985 while we were students at the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional de Bogotá in the capital city of Colombia. Students from different academic disciplines began meeting at the campus to practice different styles of Latin American popular music just because we enjoyed it. We named ourselves after the Romantic musical form called Impromptus, meaning "spontaneous."

Through constant practice and exchanging musical experiences, including those from traditional styles, plus the creative urge of the group members, we found a common purpose, that of exploring new vocal and instrumental sonorities in search of a voice that would speak to the younger generations. As with all new tendencies, our group had both admirers and detractors. The fact that our director, Mauricio Rangel Valderrama, is the son and nephew, respectively, of Oton Rangel and Oriol Rangel, both considered among the best interpreters of Colombia's traditional music, did not make the evolutionary trajectory of this group any easier. Other members of the ensemble had also been nurtured by tradition and yet, by listening to groups from

A N I N S I D E L O O K



Impromptus

other countries, particularly elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean, and focusing more on vocal styles, particularly the immensely popular ballads of the 1980s, we developed a style that we call "New Colombian Music." This could be appreciated from our first recorded work introduced in 1991. By then the ensemble had gained recognition and followers who continued the evolutionary path that "Impromptus" had started and expanded to reach a national audience. National competitions and festivals of this new music now take place in Colombia. Unfortunately, new media and means of

<p>communication seem to ignore the new styles. Moreover, the different genres of Colombian music, which are numerous due to the country's geographical location and diversity, are not equally appreciated. Andean-derived styles like ours</p>	<p>do not seem to have the popular demand that the more popular <i>salsa</i>-like Caribbean styles have. Nonetheless, we will continue to assert our own voices.</p>
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Our introduction to the music of this region begins with a discussion of the Kayapó-Xikrin, an Amazonian indigenous tribe found in the rainforests of Brazil. Next we travel to the upper reaches of the Andes Mountains, where descendants of the ancient Inca civilization continue to play the *siku* (panpipes), which are believed to date from at least the thirteenth century. Moving to urban areas, we discuss the Spanish-influenced music of *mestizo* populations throughout Mexico and South America by examining the Argentinean *tango* and the Mexican *mariachi*. Finally, we turn to the coastline of Brazil, which is home to two of the clearest examples of African influence in South America: the unique martial arts dance form known as *capoeira* and the celebratory music of Carnival known as *samba*.

Arrival: The Amazon Rainforest

The Amazonian rainforest of Brazil is one of the largest remaining tropical forests on the planet. It is home to thousands of wildlife species, such as jaguars, toucans, and macaws, and numerous nomadic and semi-nomadic hunter-gatherer human communities. During the latter decades of the twentieth century, the Amazon became a flashpoint for environmental activities concerned about the earth's deteriorating ecosystem. Logging companies were destroying (and continue to destroy) millions of acres of rainforests and have consequently displaced many Amazonian peoples. Some of these groups were forced to integrate into modern society, while others retreated further into the rainforest. Still others, such as the Kayapó Indians, managed to resist the encroachment of the modern world by actively protesting against the intruders and organizing events that drew international attention to the plight of their peoples. Today, many Amazonians have managed to straddle both worlds by educating themselves about modern society while maintaining their traditional way of life. The romantic vision of the Amazonian Indian as a bare-footed, spear-toting, loin-clothed hunter-gatherer is no longer a realistic portrayal of the native population, who can often be found in T-shirts, hunting with rifles, and sitting in classrooms learning to read and write. Still, ceremonial activities based on traditional belief systems remain at the heart of the community life of each individual group of Amazonians.

There are many distinct tribes of Amazonian peoples, and cultural traits, such as language, dress, belief system, kinship practices, and so on, vary widely from group to group. Many commonalities do exist, however, and thus some general cultural tendencies can be represented by individual groups. In our case, we focus on the Kayapó-Xikrin, who live in the southwestern area of the state of Para in central Brazil, to gain a better understanding of the music of Amazonian peoples.



Site 1: Amazonian Chant

First Impressions. Our example begins with an “eagle cry,” followed by group chanting. The singing seems to be part of a community ceremony or shamanic ritual—which is usually the case. To a non-specialist, the vocal performances of Amazonian tribes may seem indistinguishable from those of North American native groups, and indeed there are some parallel musical traits.

Aural Analysis. A first listening to an Amazonian musical performance reveals several identifiable features typical of the majority of Amerindian tribes of the Brazilian rainforests. Unison group singing is most common and is often unaccompanied. The singing is in a style characterized as chant and uses only a few pitches. Unaccompanied unison (monophonic) group chanting is not unique to Amazonian Indians, but it is a recognizable trait of most tribes of the Brazilian rainforest. Men and women usually sing separately, and indeed our example includes only male voices.

Many songs have a descending melodic contour, while others consist of only one or two pitches. A melodic drop-off usually closes a vocal phrase. The text setting is most often syllabic. The dynamic level is usually consistent, though shouting sometimes occurs but not usually as a central feature of the performance. Vocal pulsation (a slight periodic volume amplification) is sometimes employed to add a rhythmic element to purely vocal performances. Rattles, flutes, or small drums sometimes accompany these performances, though none are heard in this example. Handclapping and foot-stomping are also frequently employed to maintain a steady pulse during performance. Additionally, large sticks or hollow tree branches are sometimes pounded on the ground to add a rhythmic element.



Amazonian Indians
(Kayapó-Xikrin)
native to the
Brazilian rainforest
(Alamy)

Though the music follows a steady pulse, metrical units are frequently irregular as they follow the phrasing of the text rather than being organized into a set number of pulses.

LISTENING GUIDE



CD 3.11 (1'13")

Chapter 12: Site 1

Brazil: Amazonian Chant

Voices: Male ensemble

TIME	LISTENING FOCUS
0'00"	Listen for the "Eagle's Cry" which starts the performance.
0'04"	Listen for the "drop-off" pitch (an extended descending melodic contour of a single syllable) that will occur throughout the performance.
0'08"	Chant begins with unison group performance. Listen for the regular pulsation and gradually descending melodic contour.
0'14"	Note that each phrase follows a consistent tempo, but a meter does not regulate the space between phrases.
0'21"	Listen for the subtle "drop-off" at the end of each phrase. Note that its length is shorter than the upcoming "drop-off" pitch at the end of the first section.
0'30"	Listen for the extended "drop-off" pitch that concludes the section.
0'34"	Note that the initial pitch level is higher than in the first section. Note also that the gradually descending melodic contour continues throughout the example.
1'03"	Listen for the concluding "drop-off" pitch that ends the example.

Source: "Nhök Okkaikriki" recorded by Max Peter Baumann, 1988, from the recording entitled *Ritual Music of the Kayapó-Xikrin, Brazil*, SF 40433, provided courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. © 1995. Used by permission.

ETHNO-CHALLENGE (CD 3.11): A common speculation is that all indigenous populations in the Americas originally come from the same source. Compare some examples of chant traditions from other indigenous groups in the Americas (North and South) and draw your own conclusions as to the validity of this hypothesis.

Cultural Considerations. The music of Amazonian peoples is integral to their ritual activities. Some familiarity with these rituals is useful for a better understanding of the meaning of musical performance. The recording we have selected is the concluding section of a Kayapó-Xikrin naming ritual. Known as *takak-nhiok*, this ritual occurs in five stages over a period of five years. Each stage enables the initiates to participate in and gain new knowledge of a

growing number of activities practiced by elder members of the community, such as feather handicrafts and hunting. The status of the initiates increase, and they are given secret knowledge regarding the community's history and belief system in the form of myths, dances, song, body-painting, and featherwork.

The concluding chant of the naming ritual begins at sunset and continues until dawn. It is identified by the opening call, which imitates the screech of a Harpy Eagle. The name-recipients, in this case female, form a semicircle with their backs to the setting sun. The male vocalists complete the circle while a select group of "jaguar men," generally the elder community leaders, dance counter-clockwise around the interior of the circle, approaching each female in turn with a symbolic "clawing" gesture that completes their naming. The Harpy Eagle's chant translates as: "The claws of the Harpy Eagle will claw the Nhiock / Breathe and come through the path / Breathe and keep seeing hummingbird's feathers being born." The reference to the hummingbird is significant: The Kayapó-Xikrin believe that the hummingbird is "the jaguar remedy" (*Ritual Music of the Kayapó-Xikrin, Brazil*, SF 40433, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Folkways, 1995, p. 59). The hummingbird is considered unique; indeed, it is the only bird capable of flying backward. As such, it is quick and elusive. Hummingbird feathers are burnt and mixed with a plant to produce an ointment believed to protect an individual from jaguars. The Harpy Eagle call proclaims the final stage of the initiation ceremony, the completion of which signals that the newly named participants have acquired a higher status among the community.

For most Amazonian tribes, music is an important means of communicating with natural and spiritual forces. Totems are acknowledged and respected through music. Shamans often use music to communicate with or appease spirits of the rainforest. Indeed, some tribes believe that songs are taught to them by these spirits through dreams. Music, then, is central to the lives of Amazonians and integral to their cultural identity. The chants of the Kayapó are integrally bound up with issues common to the realm of anthropology, such as kinship systems, social organization, and gender and age classifications. Many cultural aspects of the Kayapó are reflected in their music, as they are with any group, not just in the Amazon, but around the globe.

TOTEM

A plant, animal, or natural object used as an emblem for a person or group of people.



Arrival: Peru

Peru's landscape varies widely. Urban areas are found on the western coast, while much of the eastern interior is taken up by the tropical rainforests of the Amazon. Between these two zones are the highlands, where descendants of the ancient Inca Empire still live in adobe huts among llamas and alpacas, surrounded by the snow-capped mountains of the Andes. Peru's native and mestizo peoples form the majority of the population. Both Spanish and Quechua, an indigenous language formerly associated with the Inca Empire, are recognized as official languages of Peru.

The Inca Empire dates to roughly the thirteenth century and reached its peak in the last decades of the 1400s. Important centers of power and culture included the city of Cusco in southeastern Peru near Lake Titicaca, and the stronghold of Machu Picchu some 50 miles to the northwest and nearly 9,000 feet above sea level. Spanish conquistadors began arriving in the early 1500s and quickly toppled the ruling powers of the Inca, beheading the last Inca Emperor, Túpac Amaru, in 1572.

Though Inca heritage is still a vital aspect of the cultural identity of the native population, the Spanish influence is also felt in many ways. Roman Catholicism is especially prominent throughout the region, though in a form that reveals many influences from pre-contact religious systems. The numerous religious holidays associated with both Roman Catholicism and the earlier traditions provide ample opportunities for small- and large-scale festivals in both urban and rural areas. Among the most popular are Easter celebrations, which incorporate a variety of musical activities.

Site 2: *Sikuri* (Panpipe) Ensemble

First Impressions. Aside from the pounding drum beat, the breathy sound of the melodic panpipes, called *siku*, is the most distinctive feature of this example. The short repetitive melody, with its “calliope-like” timbre, sounds joyfully out of tune and is reminiscent of a carousel ride spinning non-stop.

Aural Analysis. The *sikuri* panpipe ensemble is common to many Andean communities throughout Peru and elsewhere in Andean South America. *Sikuri* ensembles normally have around twenty *siku* players, though the group in our example is larger, consisting of fifty-two musicians. The *siku* is made of several cylindrical reeds of varying lengths tied together to form one or two rows of pipes—in this case two. The performer holds these vertically and blows across the tops of the open pipes to produce breathy pitches, just as you would with a soda bottle: the shorter the pipe, the higher the pitch. Thus, they are open-ended flutes in the aerophone family.

One *siku* is not typically capable of playing all the notes of a scale. Rather, a second *siku* must complement it. The two performers use an interlocking technique to produce the entire melody. If, for example, the first player sounds the odd-numbered pitches, say 1–3–5, while the second player sounds the even ones, 2–4–6, then the two musicians must alternate in order to play pitches 1 through 6 consecutively. The musicians try to overlap their pitches slightly so that no gaps are heard between pitches. The breathy sound of the *siku* makes it easier for performers to smoothly connect successive pitches.

Another common feature of Andean music is the use of parallel polyphony. Parallel polyphony occurs when two melodic lines follow the same melodic contour but start on different pitches, thus moving in parallel but with a polyphonic structure as well. The most commonly used intervals between the two parallel lines are the fourth and fifth. The interval used here, however, is a third, which is typical of the Conima style of which this music is an example. Intentional tuning variances often occur, sometimes as wide as a quartertone or more, giving the music a slightly dissonant quality. As is typical of native Andean music, the melodic line is short and repetitive and features only minor variations.

In our example, a large bass drum (*bombos*) and a snare drum (*cajas*) provide a driving beat. Drums in Peru are often made with a llama- or alpaca-skin face and are struck with a wooden mallet. Different genres of *sikuri* performance use different types of drums; in fact, the bass and snare drum accompaniment heard here rarely occurs outside Easter celebrations. In most performances, occasional whistles are heard, most notably toward the end of the performance, to signal the musicians to increase their tempo.

SIKU

Panpipes common among indigenous populations from Peru and throughout the Andes.

BOMBOS

A large drum used in *sikuri* performances from Peru.

Descendants of the ancient Inca still live today in the Andes Mountains of Peru (Max T. Miller)



LISTENING GUIDE



CD 3.12 (1'33")

Chapter 12: Site 2

Peru: *Sikuri* (Panpipe) Ensemble

Instruments: *Siku* (end-blown flutes), *bombos* (large drum), *cajas* (small drum)

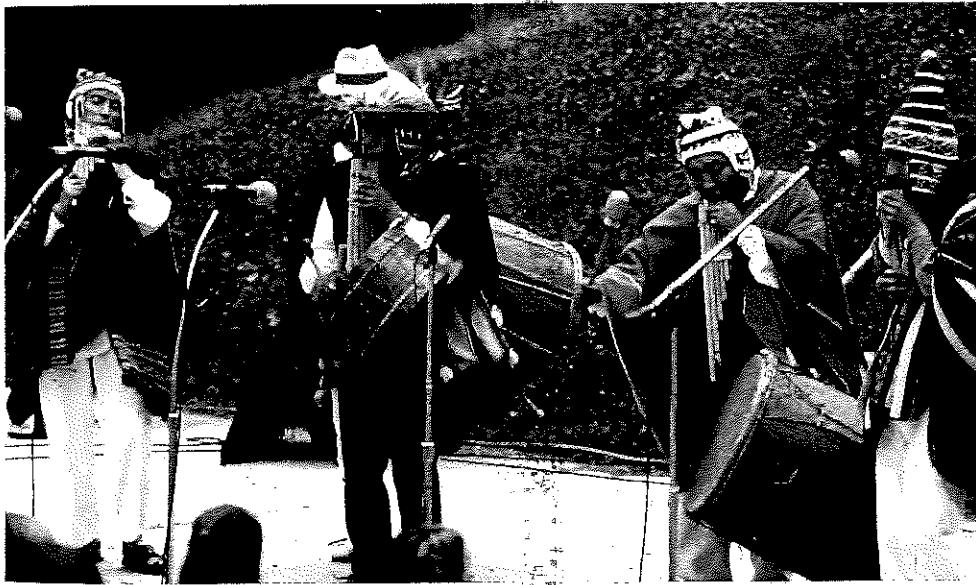
TIME LISTENING FOCUS

- 0'00"** Listen for the whistle used to call the musicians to attention and the sound of a few performers blowing quietly into their *siku*.
- 0'03"** Listen for the *siku* initiating the performance. Note the use of a homophonic structure (with parallel polyphony) throughout the performance.
- 0'05"** Listen for the *bombos* playing a regular beat. Note the number of pulses between each pause in the rhythmic pattern. Though not consistent, this pattern features two phrases with a short number of pulses (usually seven), and then a longer phrase (usually seventeen) that concludes with the end of the melodic phrase.
- 0'07"** Listen for the *cajas* entrance contrasting with the lower drum.
- 0'15"** First melodic phrase concludes.
- 0'18"** Listen for the pause of the lower drum. Note that this does not occur simultaneously with the end of the melodic phrase.
- 0'30"** Listen for the pause of the lower drum. Note that it occurs at the end of the melodic phrase.

0'41" Listen again for the pause of the lower drum in relation to the end of the melodic phrase. Continue to note this relationship throughout the performance.

Source: "Easter Music" by Qhantati Urui performed by the Conimeño Ensemble, recorded by Thomas Turino, Conima, Peru, 1985, from the recording entitled *Mountain Music of Peru: Volume 2*, SF 40406, provided courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. © 1994. Used by permission.

ETHNO-CHALLENGE (CD 3.12): Construct your own panpipe. Use the Internet to research how to do this.



An Andean panpipe and drum ensemble performs on stage at a university folk festival (Dale Olsen)

Cultural Considerations. Evidence of *siku* and other types of flutes dates to pre-Columbian times, while the many chordophones and brass instruments found today arrived only after the 1530s with Spanish conquistadors and Roman Catholic missionaries. The *sikuri* ensemble is most common among the Aymara-speaking peoples surrounding Lake Titicaca, the largest lake on the continent and the highest navigable lake in the world (at 12,500 feet above sea level). Living and farming in these highland rural areas requires collective effort and social cooperation, and scholars consider the *sikuri* ensemble a reflection of this social structure.

Sikuri is most often performed during monthly festivals associated with indigenous ceremonial rites that frequently are combined with Roman Catholic holidays. Instrumental performance is considered a male activity, while women generally dance or sing. During a *sikuri* performance, any man from the village can participate, regardless of his musical ability or familiarity with the tune. The emphasis of the performance is on social interaction rather than on a strict adherence to musical accuracy. The interlocking parts of the *siku* express the Aymara ideal of "playing as one."

The panpipes (*siku*) are among the most common indigenous instruments of the Andes



Inter-community festivals may feature several *sikuri* ensembles, each representing a different village. The performers dance in one or more circles around the drummers, who stand in the center. Friendly competitions often occur between the different ensembles as non-performers dance and cheer. The choice of a "winner" is based primarily on who has given the most energetic performance and on the general reaction of the crowd, rather than on strictly musical qualities. In short, the response of the community is the essential factor in determining a successful *sikuri* performance.

Arrival: Argentina

The pre-contact history of Argentina is sketchy. None of the ancient empires of the Americas held dominion over the territory, which was sparsely populated by hunters and gatherers and home to a few agricultural settlements. Spanish colonization of the region began in the early sixteenth century, with the first attempt at a permanent settlement, Buenos Aires, in 1536. Five years later the settlement was abandoned, due in part to conflicts with the indigenous populations. Eventually, the region was successfully colonized and Buenos Aires was

resettled in 1580. In time, the growing city became an important port and gained a reputation as a haven for smugglers. By the middle of the eighteenth century its population had swelled to more than 20,000.

The British attacked the city in 1806 but were ousted only a few months later by a citizen army. Subsequent attempts by the British to overtake the city failed and indeed encouraged a strong patriotic sentiment among the city's inhabitants. However, in 1810 the people of Buenos Aires rebelled against the Spanish crown, and only a few years later they succeeded in gaining their independence. It is this spirit of rebellion that drives the *tango* in its purest form.

Site 3: *Tango*

First Impressions. *Tango*, both as a dance and as music, embodies passion. The original form of the dance it accompanies symbolically represents a battle between two men for the affections of a fickle woman. At one point in the dance, one of the male dancers lustfully looms over the helpless woman before she is torn away by the other jealous suitor. Even in its simplest form, the music evokes the predatory states of the men and the indecisiveness of the woman through variations of dynamics, tempo, and phonic structure.

TANGO
A dance and associated music originating in Argentina.

Aural Analysis. *Tango* ensembles vary in size, and *tango* itself comes in a variety of styles. A distinctive feature of most *tango* orchestras is the inclusion of the *bandoneón*, a type of button-box accordion. The *bandoneón* was invented in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century by Heinrich Band and was brought to South America around 1890, initially in the hands of missionaries who found it a portable alternative to the organ. The instrument has two square wooden manuals (keyboards) separated by a bellows made of leather. Larger *bandoneón* have up to seventy-two buttons, but the distribution pattern does not follow the usual melody-chord dichotomy found on typical accordions. As the performer alternately compresses or draws out the bellows, air passes through a series of "free" metal reeds to produce the tones; thus, the *bandoneón* is a free-reed aerophone. Dynamic variations are produced by squeezing or drawing the air through the instrument more quickly for greater volume or more slowly for a quieter sound. In addition to the *bandoneón*, the violin, guitar, flute, and piano are frequently found in *tango* ensembles and a vocalist is often present as well.

BANDONEÓN
A type of button-box accordion.

Tango rhythms are frequently syncopated, meaning some accents fall between the regular beat. Our example employs a common *tango* rhythm by emphasizing the offbeats of the first and second pulses. In order to hear this, you must first find the regular pulsation to establish a meter, in this case a duple meter with four beats. The melodic line anticipates the first beat of each four-beat grouping; therefore, it is probably easier to find the first pulse by listening to the underlying chords. The tempo is rather quick and fluctuates frequently, as is typical of *tango*.

The syncopated *tango* rhythm falls within the four-beat grouping. Once you have established the meter by counting the four-beat grouping, divide this by saying "and" between each pulse, that is, 1&2&3&4&. The "and" division indicates the "offbeat." The *tango* rhythm, articulated by the underlying chords, displays a fairly constant pattern of 1&-&3-(4)-. The "2" beat is absent, as is the "4&." Most of the melodic phrases also begin on the "offbeat,"

The *bandoneón*, an accordion common in Argentina, is the most prominent instrument that accompanies the tango (Geoffrey Clifford/Getty Images)



typically the “and” of the third beat. This emphasis on syncopation creates an off-balance feel throughout the performance: the musicians constantly flirt with the regular beat, but never commit to it. Indeed, this aspect of *tango* music parallels the fickle affections of the female character in *tango* dance’s symbolic courtship battle. Interestingly, in American-style ballroom *tango* dance steps begin right on beat 1, but in International style, many steps begin on the “&” following beat 1.

The indecisive seductions of the female *tango* dancer are also manifested through fluctuations in dynamics, tempo, phonic structure, and even key. Bursts of volume with strong chord accompaniment at a quick tempo contrast with soft, sultry, slow passages with only a single melodic line. Though *tango* music is dominated by minor keys, the performers will often slip in brighter passages that utilize major keys, again keeping the music off-balance. As the dancers embrace in a loving gaze characterized by a major key, they suddenly turn from each other as the music abruptly shifts back to minor. Such variations of mood are essential to the unique character of the *tango*.

LISTENING GUIDE



CD 3.13 (1'54")

Chapter 12: Site 3

Argentina: *Tango*Instruments: *Bandoneón* (reed aerophone, i.e., accordion)

TIME	LISTENING FOCUS
0'00"	Listen for the use of melody and accompanying harmony. Note the "tango" rhythmic pattern (1 & - & 3 - (4) -) articulated by the chord accompaniment.
0'09"	Listen for the slight <i>ritard</i> (slowing tempo) at this point. Note the variations in tempo throughout the example.
0'19"	Note that the "tango rhythm" briefly drops out.
0'26"	Listen for the contrasting melodic line of the lower harmony and the less-consistent use of the tango rhythm.
0'44"	Listen for the swell in volume. Note the varying use of dynamics throughout the example.
0'47"	Listen for the slowing tempo and decrease in volume.
0'51"	Listen for the high-pitched melodic trill and the absence of harmony.
0'53"	Listen for the contrasting harmonic pitch underneath the melodic line.
1'01"	Listen for the return of the tango rhythm in the harmonic accompaniment and the gradual increase in volume.
1'07"	Listen for the syncopated rhythmic patterns of the harmony.
1'15"	Listen for the swell in volume, slowing of the tempo, absence of the harmony, and loss of tango rhythm.
1'19"	Listen for the dramatic swell of the harmony and the contrasting solo melody that follows.
1'24"	Listen for the return of the tango rhythm in the supporting harmony.
1'44"	Listen for the final swell in volume, which signals the end of the performance.

Source: "El Choclo" (The Ear of Corn): *Tango Criollo* by René Marino Rivero, recorded by Tiago de Oliveira Pinto, 1991, from the recording entitled *Raíces Latinas: Smithsonian-Folkways Latino Roots Collection*, SF 40470, provided courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. © 2002. Used by permission.

ETHNO-CHALLENGE (CD 3.13): Find an instructor in your area and take a tango dance lesson. You might also research various appearances of tango performance in movies and compare each version of the dance and musical accompaniment.

Cultural Considerations. Buenos Aires, Argentina, is the birthplace of *tango*. Since its resettlement in 1580 by Spanish sailors, this city has been a port of call for sea sojourners navigating around South America. As a hub of maritime trade for more than four hundred years, the city has attracted a variety of immigrants, primarily Spanish, but also Italian. Trade with European cities boomed after Argentina was officially proclaimed independent from Spain in 1816. By 1880, when it emerged as the capital city of Argentina, Buenos Aires was one of the most important economic and cultural centers of Latin America.

As often happened with port cities during the nineteenth century, the transient lifestyle of seamen encouraged a seedy subculture characterized by taverns and bordellos where sailors could unwind before heading to their next port of call. Knife fights and bar brawls over women were common occurrences among the *porteños* (people of the port area), typically initiated by inebriated sailors vying for the affections of a single seductive strumpet. *Tango* dance reflects these possessive relationships, originally casting two men and a woman in a sensual choreography with a distinctly predatory nature: the "vertical expression of horizontal desire," as it is often described. *Tango* music also suggests such seduction as the musicians thrust and parry through dynamic variations and tempo fluctuations, echoing the love triangle narrative of the dance.

Because of its lurid association with the vagabonds of the brothels, *tango* was disdained by aristocrats, who considered the music and its dance to be vulgar. Yet the lure of bohemian nightlife attracted many, especially among the younger generation, who flocked to *tango* just as teenagers in the United States later flocked to rock 'n' roll. By the end of the nineteenth century, *tango* had captured the youthful passions of popular culture in Buenos Aires and quickly spread throughout Argentina and the urban centers of many South American countries (including Uruguay, from which our example derives).

The Argentine *tango*, unlike the regularized ballroom form, requires rapid changes of emotion, from control to inflamed passion (Jack Vartoogian/ FrontRowPhotos)



The attraction to *tango* was not limited to South America. By 1910 *tango* was tantalizing the playboys and dilettantes of salons in Paris, France, and it soon made its screen debut together with Rudolph Valentino in *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1926). Carlos Gardel (1887–1935) became an international superstar as *tango-canción* (*tango* song) was popularized on the radio and in the cinema. But in the United States, where puritan moralists have long considered dance to be sinful, Vernon and Irene Castle, who brought *tango* into the ballroom dance world, felt obligated to reassure readers of their *tango*-instructional booklets that this new and exceptionally sensual dance would not corrupt anyone's morals:

The much-misunderstood Tango becomes an evolution of the eighteenth-century Minuet. There is in it no strenuous clasping of partners, no hideous gyrations of the limbs, no abnormal twistings, no vicious angles. Mr. Castle affirms that when the Tango degenerates into an acrobatic display or into salacious suggestion it is the fault of the dancers and not of the dance. The Castle Tango is courtly and artistic, and this is the only Tango taught by the Castle House instructors.

(Elisabeth Marbury in Castle, 1914, p. 20)

The Castle version of *tango* codified the choreography of *tango* for ballroom dance contexts, which has become the foundation for its performance around the world today. *Tango* in social contexts, however, maintained more fluid and "salacious suggestion," particularly in Argentina where the dance originated.

By the 1940s *tango* had seduced every social class, but the Golden Age of *tango* was nearing its end. After World War II, rock 'n' roll pushed *tango* (as well as jazz) from the airwaves and dance clubs, although it still found an audience in Argentina and among many of the upper classes who had accepted it as the sultry side of ballroom dance. *Tango* never regained its former popularity, although composers such as Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992) helped to establish it as a music genre independent of the dance itself. Interest in *tango* briefly surged in the 1980s, and it has maintained its visibility to the present day, in part through the inclusion of tantalizing *tango* scenes in hit films such as *The Scent of a Woman* (1992), starring Al Pacino, and *Moulin Rouge!* (2001), starring Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor.

Arrival: Brazil

Brazil is the largest country in South America and home to roughly 186 million inhabitants. Our earlier visit to the Amazonian rainforests presented a stark contrast to the bustling activity of the urban centers that dot the eastern half of the country. Brazil's largest cities are mostly found along the coastline and include Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Salvador. The country was colonized by the Portuguese, who began arriving in the region around 1500. They discovered a land rich in natural resources and with fertile soil. Within fifty years Portuguese colonialists began to import slaves from Africa to work on sugar, tobacco, and coffee plantations. Gold was discovered in the late 1600s, encouraging the enslavement of more Africans to work as miners. African populations were imported to Brazil for more than three hundred years, resulting today in the largest African Diaspora in the world.

Brazil became an independent nation in 1822. The government was then ruled by a succession of emperors descended from members of the Portuguese royal family. The abolition

BRAZIL

of slavery in 1888 was followed the next year by a revolution initiated by the military, which ousted the monarchy and created a federal republic in Brazil. The new government struggled to represent its diverse population equitably. Most of the political power resided with the wealthy landowners, invariably of European descent, while the vast majority of the population, either *mulatto* or of purely African descent, occupied the slum areas of the urban centers and had little or no political voice. By 1930 discontent among the masses had come to a head, while a collapse in the economy, brought on by the global depression that began in 1929, caused the landowning elite to lose confidence in their elected officials. A disgruntled military once again encouraged revolution, which was personified by the rise to power of a single man, Getúlio Vargas (1883–1954).

Vargas was a central figure in the revolution of 1930 and became president and ruled as an elected official until 1937. Rather than risk losing power, Vargas initiated a revolution of his own with the help of the military and with the support of the urban working and middle classes. He eliminated the congress and ruled by decree as a dictator for the next eight years. Vargas began many social and economic reforms that were, ironically, modeled after the policies of the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, against whom the Brazilian military fought (in aid of the United States) during World War II. His *Estado Novo* (New State) encouraged a strong sense of a unified national identity among the masses and a feeling of pride in being Brazilian, no matter what a person's ethnic background or social class. His propaganda machine was instrumental in the promotion of *samba* as a music for all Brazilians.

Site 4: *Samba*

First Impressions. *Samba* is dance music. Its boisterous beat, wailing whistles, and shouting *sambistas* encourage the party atmosphere associated with its most notable context, Carnival (see below). The driving *samba* beat conjures up images of revelers parading through the streets of Rio de Janeiro in frenetic celebration. *Samba* music makes you move from the bottom of your feet to the top of your head.

SAMBA
A popular music and type of dance from Brazil.

Aural Analysis. *Samba* is strongly Afro-Brazilian, meaning that its musical characteristics are primarily drawn from African ingredients but have a unique Brazilian flavor. Polyrhythm underlies the instrumental organization; thus, the majority of instruments in *samba* are percussion. African-derived double bells (*agogo*), tambourines, scraping instruments (*rêco-rêco*), and drums, large (*surdo* or *bombô*) and small (*caixa*), are all instruments commonly found in a wide variety of *samba* styles. The most distinct *samba* instrument is the friction drum (*cuíca*), which is a membranophone that has its face pierced in the center with a long, thin stick. When the stick is pushed, pulled, or twisted, it rubs against the membrane to produce a unique squeaking sound. Call-and-response vocals, usually in Portuguese, are standard, and are generally accompanied by a guitar.

AGOGO
A double-bell found in Western Africa and used in African-derived musics in the Western hemisphere.

RÊCO-RÊCO
A notched scraper idiophone found in Latin American music traditions.

A prominent "*samba* rhythm," usually played by the largest drum or an electrified bass guitar, is what most differentiates the music from other Latin American dance musics. The *samba* rhythm is based on a standard duple meter but emphasizes the third beat by inserting a short pause just before it. In a four-beat pattern (though *samba* moves so quickly, it is typically thought of as having only two beats), the *samba* rhythm would sound on the first

beat, the “and” of the second, and the top of the third beat, that is, 1-&3-. The rhythm is infectious and seems to call out: “Mooove your feet! Mooove your feet!” Other instruments add several other more rhythmically dense patterns to this fundamental *samba* groove.

LISTENING GUIDE



CD 3.14 (2'02")

Chapter 12: Site 4

Brazil: *Samba*

Vocals: Lead mixed ensemble and single male soloist

Instruments: Guitar, *cavaco* (high-ranged guitar), electric bass, *surdo* (low-pitched drum), *cuíca* (friction drum), *pandeiro* (tambourine), shaker

TIME	LISTENING FOCUS
0'00"	Example fades in. Listen for the underlying polyrhythm of the percussion and the consistent samba rhythm (1- &3-) of the electric bass and <i>surdo</i> (low-pitched drum). Note the contrasting middle-ranged guitar and high-ranged <i>cavaco</i> .
0'03"	Listen for the spoken dialogue of the solo vocalist.
0'10"	Listen for the mixed vocal ensemble entrance on the word “samba.”
0'24"	Listen for the “squeaking” timbre of the <i>cuíca</i> (friction drum).
0'45"	Listen for the solo vocalist adding exclamations to complement the choral melody.
1'24"	Return to opening melody and verse.
1'52"	Example fades.

Source: “*Agoniza, Mas Nao Morre*” (“It suffers but doesn’t die”), performed by Nelson Sargento, from the recording entitled *Brazil Roots: Samba*, Rounder CD 5045, 1989. Used by permission.

ETHNO-CHALLENGE (CD 3.14): Compare and contrast the varying styles of *samba* music.

Cultural Considerations. *Samba* traces its roots to Angola and the Congo in Africa. Its name is believed to be derived from the term *semba*, a Bantu word describing the distinctive “belly bump” found in some circle dances of the region. The navel is considered a spiritually significant body part, and contact between two navels symbolically links two dancers together. In Brazil, the *samba* folk dance begins with this gesture of bumping bellies as a dancer invites another dancer to enter the circle and dance together as one.

Initially, the ruling powers of Brazil viewed *samba* as a vulgar dance performed by slum-dwellers who lived in the *favelas* (slums) on the hills surrounding the city of Rio de Janeiro



Costumed drummers march in the Carnival parade of Montevideo, Uruguay (Shutterstock)

and in the *bairro*, a section of the city known as "Little Africa" due to the large number of African-descended inhabitants. The popularity of *samba* was especially visible during the Carnival season (see below), when music and celebration in the streets were more tolerated by government authorities. The driving rhythms of the music and the erotic appeal of the dance gradually attracted members of the rising middle class, many of whom were *mulatto* (of mixed African-Iberian ancestry), so that by the mid-1920s composing *samba* had become a full-time occupation for many talented artists. Each year, neighborhood associations would parade through the streets during Carnival playing music and dancing to popular *samba* melodies, usually composed by one of their own members. By the end of the decade, these associations were referring to themselves as *escolas de samba* (*samba schools*).

After taking power in 1930, Getúlio Vargas actively encouraged *samba* as part of his *Estado Novo* campaign to promote a unified Brazilian national identity. In 1934 he made Carnival an official national event and decreed that only *samba schools* legally registered with the government could perform in parades. He further encouraged *samba* and its association with Carnival by offering public funds to support the registered *samba schools*, which were strongly encouraged to create costumes and compose music that stimulated national pride by glorifying national heroes and promoting patriotic symbols. Though such overt nationalism has fallen out of fashion, public support of the *samba schools* and a focus on Carnival as the hallmark event of the Brazilian calendar year have remained.

Today, *samba* is nearly synonymous with Brazilian popular music. The term covers a variety of styles in much the same way the term *jazz* is used to describe a broad range of styles in the United States. The best-known styles, namely *samba-carnavalesco* (carnival *samba*), *samba-baiana* (Bahian *samba*), and *samba-enredo* (theme *samba*), are still associated with Carnival. Also popular is *samba-canção* (song *samba*), which is a staple of

Brazilian nightclubs and the origin of *bossa nova*, a particularly popular style for ballroom dance. Since the 1990s *samba-reggae*, the Brazilian version of Jamaican *reggae*, has become widely known as well.

Explore More

Carnival

Carnival is a pre-Lenten festival associated in the Americas with countries where Roman Catholicism was the primary religious tradition of the colonizers. The tradition originated in Europe but has come to be most associated with the grand parades and intense revelry of places such as Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Port of Spain (Trinidad), and New Orleans (USA, where it is known as *Mardi Gras*).

Traditionally, Carnival celebrations were considered the last "party" before the forty days of Lent, during which Roman Catholics are supposed to renew themselves spiritually by abstaining from activities such as drinking alcohol, eating meat, dancing, and playing music. Weddings and other celebratory events were also forbidden during the Lenten season. The elite social classes held masked balls to indulge themselves before the commencement of Lent. Among the "common folk," outdoor festivals were held, which typically included a variety of "Carnival" games, jugglers, comedians, storytellers, and so on, much like the Renaissance Fairs of today. Among those to encourage the Carnival celebration were Gypsies (see Chapter 9), many of whom made their living by performing as entertainers and musicians.

The Carnival season, which typically lasted four or five days, was considered a time to "forgive and forget" any animosity between individuals, and the authorities also tended to be

more lenient during the celebrations. This carefree attitude was transferred to the New World. The European colonialists maintained their tradition of masked balls and indoor revelry in many cities throughout the Caribbean, while the lower classes, most of whom were of African descent, were usually allowed to celebrate with outdoor activities. A common feature of these outdoor activities was the street parade, which has since become the highlight of nearly every Carnival celebration around the world.

The Brazilian Carnival celebrations are considered by many to be the pinnacle of the festivals held the world over. Thousands of people travel to Rio de Janeiro to participate in the non-stop partying that characterizes the Carnival Season (between February and March, depending on the date of Ash Wednesday). Body paint, confetti and streamers, lots of alcohol, and continuous dancing to the *samba* beat mark the annual activities, which are capped with a parade through the city center featuring the most extravagant costumes and floats found in any festival the world over. *Sambistas* dance through the city streets followed by batteries of deafening percussion. *Samba* schools compete for prizes based on their music performance, dance choreography, and costumes. Each school's performance is organized around a specific theme, typically one that promotes Brazilian identity and revolves around national, historical, or political figures and events.

CAPOEIRA

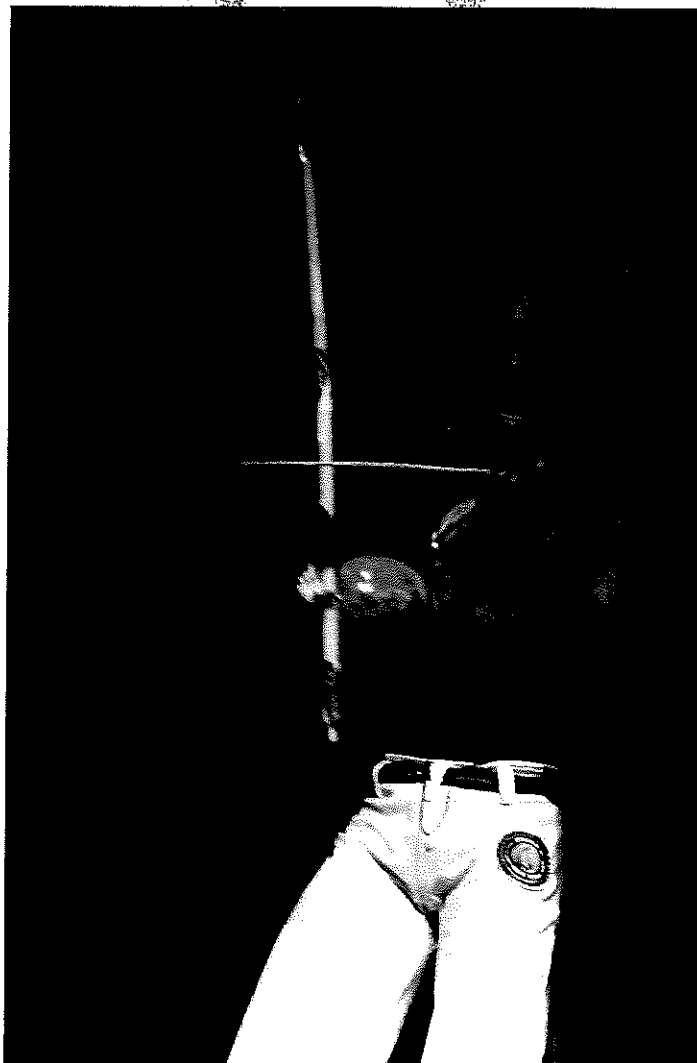
A dance that developed from a style of martial arts created by runaway slaves in Brazil.

Site 5: Capoeira Music

First Impressions. *Capoeira* is music with a groove. Whereas the *samba* music of Carnival pushes the body to a frenetic extreme, *capoeira* music embodies the laid-back attitude Brazilians often take during the rest of the year. The music constantly bobs and weaves as if the listener is relaxing on a small fishing boat along the Brazilian coastline. The waves

bring him closer and closer to shore, gradually picking up momentum as he casually steers himself onto the beach. Fluid motion is the general feel, but there is also a constant awareness that the waves can tip the boat at any moment.

Aural Analysis. Among the key features of *capoeira* music are the call-and-response organization of the vocal performers and the subtle polyrhythmic organization of the African-derived instruments. These instruments include the *pandeiros* (tambourines), *agogo* (double bell), *rêco-rêco* (notched scraper), and *atabaque* (drum), as well as the most distinctive instrument of the *capoeira* ensemble, the *berimbau* (musical bow). All of these instruments were recreated in Brazil by African slaves taken in particular from areas now comprising the modern Central African nations of Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire).



PANDEIROS

A hand-held frame drum with attached cymbals (i.e., a tambourine), used in *capoeira* music.

ATABAQUE

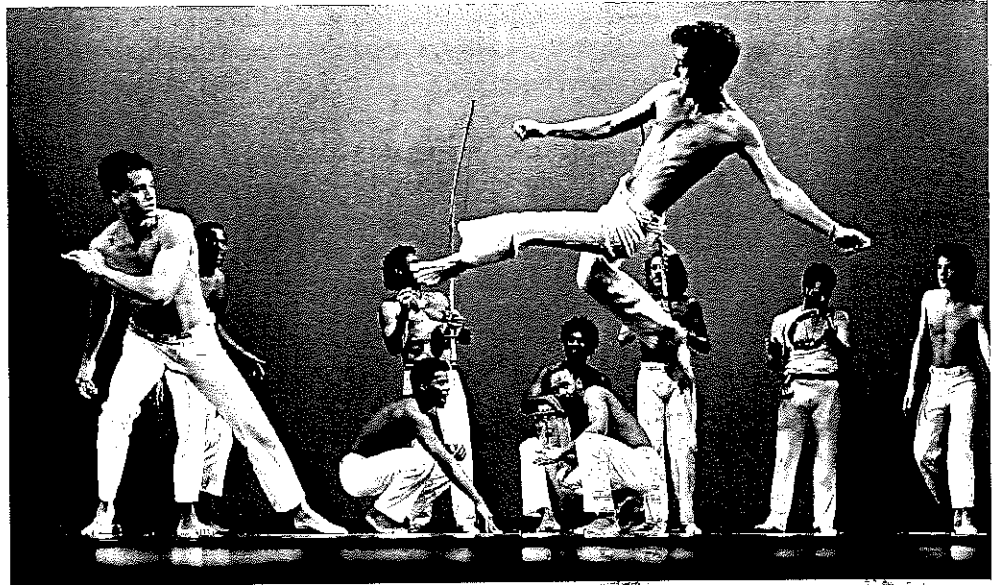
A drum of West African origin used in *capoeira* music as well as *candomblé* rituals.

BERIMBAU

A musical bow used in *capoeira* music.

The Brazilian *berimbau* (musical bow) played during a *capoeira* performance (Jack Vartoogian/ FrontRowPhotos)

Capoeira artists in the midst of "combat." *Berimbau* performers and other musicians are pictured in the background (Jack Vartoogian/ FrontRowPhotos)



In our example, which is the *Capoeira Angola* style, three *berimbau* are played, to provide low, middle, and high parts. The *berimbau* is made from a wooden bow with a steel string. A piece of twine is looped around the base of the bow to attach a gourd resonator, which is pressed against the body to change the timbre and pitch of the instrument's sound. The smallest finger of one hand, usually the left for a right-handed player, balances the instrument on this loop during performance. A large coin or stone is held between the thumb and forefinger and is pressed against the string in order to change the acoustic length of the string and consequently alter the pitch. This coin is sometimes only lightly pressed against the string, so as to produce a buzzing timbre.

The other hand strikes the string with a small stick several inches long. This hand also holds a small wicker basket that encloses a handful of either pebbles or small seashells. The performer simultaneously shakes this rattle as he strikes the string of the bow with the stick. The timbre of the *berimbau* is much like the "boing" sound of a large spring. The use of the coin, rattle, and open string, along with the varied resonances produced by the gourd, allows the *berimbau* to provide a great variety of simultaneous timbres.

Though the vocalists carry the primary melody, the unique "springy" timbre of the *berimbau* is the focus of the dancing that this music typically accompanies. In the *Capoeira Angola* style, the lowest-pitched *berimbau* plays the basic pattern, while the middle *berimbau* plays a complementary rhythm. The highest *berimbau* ornaments these basic patterns with improvisation, paying close attention to the movements of the dancers.

The steady groove of the music is provided by the other instruments. The fundamental rhythm, 1-&3-4-, is set by the drum with three low tones and a "slap" on the fourth beat. This rhythm is common to most *capoeira* music as it corresponds to the basic *ginga* movement of the dancers (see below). The other instruments follow their own rhythms, being careful not to overshadow the fundamental beat or the sound of the *berimbau* trio.

As the music progresses, the tempo often gradually increases. The *berimbau* pattern will subtly shift throughout, urging the dancers to heighten their performance. The basic

GINGA
(Also, JENGA)
A back-and-forth
motion used as the
basis for *capoeira*
dancing.

ginga pattern of the drum does not change, but the other instruments may shift their patterns, creating denser rhythms to correspond with the increased intensity of the music. The dynamic level typically remains constant, though the *berimbau* may increase its volume as the dancers "play" harder.

The vocal organization remains in call-and-response form throughout a performance. The text setting is primarily syllabic and has a descending melodic contour. The melody will change as the music progresses but generally keeps the same phrase length. The lyrics are generally sung in Portuguese, the national language of Brazil, and tend to focus on the dancers, the musicians, or other aspects of *capoeira* performance. Oftentimes the singers use symbolic language, such as describing a large dancer as a tall immobile tree, to prod the dancers to better or faster movements.

LISTENING GUIDE



Chapter 12: Site 5
Brazil: *Capoeira* Music

Vocals: Single male lead and supporting male ensemble
Instruments: *Berimbau* (musical bow), *pandeiros* (tambourine), *atabaque* (drum), *rêco-rêco* (scraped idiophone), *agogo* (double bell)

TIME	LISTENING FOCUS
0'00"	Listen for the lead vocal "call" as the example fades in. Note the underlying polyrhythm along with the steady rhythmic pattern (1-& 3-4-) provided by the drum. Also, listen for the distinct two-pitch timbre of the <i>berimbau</i> .
0'06"	Listen for the group vocal response.
0'10"	Listen for the lead vocal "call" and subsequent group response. Note that this structure occurs throughout the performance.
0'21"	Listen for the change in melodic rhythm of the lead <i>berimbau</i> and subsequent emphasis on syncopated rhythms and divergence from emphasizing the basic pulse of the underlying polyrhythmic percussion.
0'50"	Listen for the lead <i>berimbau</i> returning to the basic pulse established by the underlying polyrhythmic percussion.
0'58"	Listen for the lead <i>berimbau</i> again emphasizing syncopated rhythmic activity.
1'08"	Listen for the return of the melodic rhythm of the lead <i>berimbau</i> heard at 0'21," and subsequent rhythmic improvisations.
1'19"	Example fades.

Source: "Sala do Mar Marinheiro" by Grupo de Capoeira Anglo-Palurinho, from the recording entitled *Capoeira Angola* from Salvador, Brazil, SF 40465, provided courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. © 1996. Used by permission.

ETHNO-CHALLENGE (CD 3.15): Construct a *berimbau*. Alternatively, provide the drum rhythm throughout the example. If possible, find a *capoeira* club in your local area and observe a practice session or performance.

Cultural Considerations. *Capoeira* is a unique form of dance that developed from a distinctive style of martial arts created by runaway slaves in Brazil. Before abolition, many slaves who escaped the oppression of the sugar and coffee plantations would take refuge in the mountains near the country's coastline. Not having guns or swords, they developed a martial arts system that drew upon various fighting styles from Africa. The system that was created, which is known as *compé*, emphasizes the use of the feet during combat. The movements are characterized by cartwheels, handstands, flips, and spinning motions.

After slavery was abolished in Brazil, many of the *capoeira* artists continued to utilize their skills as bodyguards for Brazil's social elite. Many others formed gangs, which led to *capoeira* being associated with street fighting and vandalism. The authorities, of course, frowned on such disturbances, so the gangs attempted to disguise their practice sessions and street fights by simultaneously performing music. Because the music and fighting styles were African-based, the European-descended officials were fooled into accepting the *capoeira* movements as an unusual dance style rather than a combat technique. Eventually, the inclusion of music in the performance of *capoeira* became standard practice, so that today the genre is often regarded as more of a dance style than a martial arts system.

A *capoeira* performance takes place in a *roda*, a large circle approximately 18 feet (5.48 meters) in diameter that is outlined by the *capoeira* musicians and other participants standing in observation of the dancers. The two dancers typically begin the performance by "bowing" to the *berimbau*, typically the lowest sounding one, which is usually played by the senior *mestre* (master) of the group. The dancers then perform opening movements intended to assess the abilities of their opponent. This initial section is described as "cooperative," because the opponents do not attempt to strike their partner but rather work together to execute interesting moves, such as back flips and back-to-back body rolls. Throughout the performance, only the hands, feet, and head of the *capoeira* artist are allowed to touch the ground.

As the performance progresses, the dancers slow their movements in conjunction with a shift in the music. This "control" section is intended to develop the strength and balance of the performers as they slowly move through cartwheels and handstands, still making little attempt to strike their opponent. Finally, the music urges the performers to move to the "confrontational" section of the dance, in which the *capoeira* artists execute their movements with full force. The objective during this section is to knock the opponent off-balance and send him to the mat or into the ring of observers.

The basic beat of the music, which is articulated as 1-&3-4-, corresponds to the dance movement known as *ginga*. This movement requires the performer to cross one leg behind the other and lean back before springing forward to repeat the same movement with legs crossed in the opposite direction. The *ginga* is the starting position for all strikes, because it allows the performer to keep in constant motion and attain more momentum from the back position as he strikes forward.

The music is intended to encourage the performers, and the vocalists prod the dancers to higher feats of skill and comment on the action. If, for example, a smaller opponent topples

a larger one, the lead vocalist may sing about the “falling of a tree” to tease the defeated foe. The *mestre* may shift the music to bring a performance “down” if he feels the dancers’ performance is becoming too competitive and is threatening to turn into genuine fighting. While novice dancers focus on the *ginga* rhythm, advanced performers focus on the sound of the *berimbau* to spur themselves to perform more intense choreography. The sound of the *berimbau* bobs in and out of the basic rhythm in much the same way the performers weave in and out of reach of each other’s strikes.

Capoeira has achieved an international reputation in the past decade as a unique martial art worthy of inclusion in competitions around the world. *Capoeira* clubs are increasingly popular in the United States and throughout the Western hemisphere. Though there is no direct relationship, the similarities between some of the *capoeira* moves and break-dancing, popular in the United States in the 1980s and experiencing a resurgence of interest in the early twenty-first century, have helped bring the *capoeira* tradition to the attention of many young Americans, especially because *capoeira* artists sometimes integrate their moves into dance club performances.

Arrival: Mexico

Mexico is the fourth largest country in the Western hemisphere and has a population of 107 million. Mexico City, the largest urban area in the world today, with more than fifteen million people, is built on the ruins of Tenochtitlán, the center of trade and military activity of the Aztec empire, which dominated the region for nearly one hundred years. The Aztec era (1427–1521) remains an important source of cultural pride for much of the population, many of whom are direct descendants of the Aztec.

While the native heritage of the Mexican population is important, the influence of Spanish culture is also quite prevalent. Many of the soldiers of the Spanish explorer Hernán Cortés, who conquered the Aztec, intermarried with the native populations, as did the Spanish colonialists who followed in their wake. As a result, more than 80 percent of Mexico’s present population is *mestizo*, that is, a mix of Spanish and native ethnic heritage. The influence of the *mestizo*’s Spanish ancestry is visible in many aspects of Mexican culture. The architecture of Mexico’s churches, the fact that Spanish is the national language (though many indigenous languages continue to flourish, including Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, spoken today by more than a million people), and, certainly, Mexico’s music are all indicative of strong Spanish roots.

Site 6: Mariachi

First Impressions. *Mariachi* is often a festive music. While sad and romantic songs are common to the genre, contagiously peppy performances, such as the audio example, are the more common conception of mariachi music. A single listen to this celebratory style can conjure images of confetti and firecrackers with revelers holding their margarita glasses high and singing along with sombrero-topped musicians.

Aural Analysis. *Mariachi* is heavily imbued with European musical characteristics. This is shown most obviously by its instrumentation, which incorporates such familiar instruments



MARIACHI
An entertainment music associated with festivals and celebratory events in Mexico.

VIHUELA

A small, fretted plucked lute from Mexico, similar to a guitar but with a convex resonator.

GUIARRÓN

A large fretted plucked lute from Mexico, similar to a guitar but with a convex resonator.

as the violin, the trumpet, and the guitar. Guitars appear in a number of forms, including the *vihuela* (small guitar) and *guitarrón* (large guitar), both of which have convex resonators. Frequent changes in instrumentation are characteristic of *mariachi* music as different instrumental sections are highlighted to produce contrasting textures. Melodic passages are exchanged between the violins and the trumpets, with the guitars as a constant rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment. Few percussion instruments are heard in *mariachi*, because the percussive sound of the guitarists as well as the handclapping and foot-stomping of the dancers (absent from the recording) usually provide enough rhythm.

Vocalists use a full, often operatic voice, complemented by the occasional yells and laughter of fellow band members, who chime in to help make the music more festive. During vocal sections, the violins and trumpets generally play a secondary role to avoid overshadowing the singer. Song texts often have romantic themes, but they may also be about work, as with our example, *Los Arrieros* (The Muleteers). Lyrics with political or religious references are less common. Due to the Iberian descent of mestizo musicians, Spanish is the language of the *mariachi* singer.

Another key feature of *mariachi* is the use of clear, often memorable melodic lines, such as the melody of "La Cucaracha" (The Cockroach), a well-known Spanish folk tune that became popular in Mexico during the early twentieth century. Modern *mariachi* bands typically use trumpets and/or violins to play the main melody. Shifts in tempo corresponding to variations in instrumentation are also common; for example, if performance of the main melody switches from violins to trumpet. These changes in tempo typically correspond with changes in the movements of dancers and are reminiscent of the frequent

A Mexican *mariachi* group performs at a North American wedding. (From left to right) violin, *guitarrón*, *vihuela*, guitar, and trumpets (Alija/Getty Images)



tempo changes found in Spanish flamenco music. *Mariachi* music may follow a variety of meters, which are usually clear-cut and in duple or triple meter, occasionally shifting along with changes in tempo. Our example is a song style known as *son jalisciense*, which tends to be more rhythmically active than most *mariachi* music, with its frequent subtle shifts of meter and tempo.

STROPHIC

In song lyrics, the use of distinct units (strophes) that have the same number of lines, rhyme scheme, and meter.

Mariachi music is most often in a major key, which is characteristic of “happy” music in European-related music traditions. Dynamic variations result from changes in instrumentation, as the trumpet-highlighted sections are louder than those sections emphasizing the violins or vocalist. The form of our example includes many distinctive sections, essentially **strophic**, meaning that the music repeats with each new verse sung by the vocalist.

LISTENING GUIDE



CD 3.16 (2'30")

Chapter 12: Site 6

Mexico: *Mariachi*

Vocals: Single male lead with supporting male ensemble

Instruments: Violins, trumpets, mid-range guitar, *vihuela* (high-range guitar), *guitarrón* (low-range guitar)

TIME	LISTENING FOCUS
0'00"	Listen for the freely rhythmic melodic introduction of violins and trumpets in harmony.
0'03"	Listen for the entrance of the guitar trio accompaniment, followed by an increased rhythmic density in the melody.
0'05"	Listen for the declamations of the lead vocalist.
0'08"	Listen for the decreased rhythmic density and freer rhythm. Note the subsequent return of a rhythmically dense passage with a regular beat.
0'15"	Listen for the descending melodic contour and steady triple meter.
0'28"	Listen for the repeat of the descending melodic contour in triple meter.
0'41"	Lead vocalist begins first verse. Listen for the shift to duple meter and increased tempo.
0'44"	Listen for the violins and trumpets closing the phrase with a thick rhythmic density and syncopated accents that contrast with the beat of the vocalist and guitars.
0'47"	Melodic phrase repeats.
0'55"	Listen for new melodic material from the vocalist and supporting guitars.
1'03"	Listen for the syncopated rhythmic activity of the supporting guitars.
1'06"	Listen for the violins closing the melodic phrase and the subsequent repetition of the vocal line by the supporting vocal ensemble.

1'15" Listen for the syncopated rhythmic activity of the supporting guitars.

1'19" Listen for the trumpets closing the melodic phrase.

1'20" Listen for the shift to the trumpets and violins as the opening melodic material returns. Also, note the vocal declamations of the lead vocalist. Compare this material with that at the beginning of the performance.

2'00" Vocalist begins second verse.

2'24" Example fades.

Source: "Los Arrieros" ("The Muleteers"), performed by Mariachi Los Camperos de Naticano, from the recording entitled *Rajces Latinas: Smithsonian Folkways Latino Roots Collection*, SF 40470, provided courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. © 2002. Used by permission.

ETHNO-CHALLENGE (CD 3.16): If possible, attend a performance of a *mariachi* ensemble in your local area. Also, examine the portrayal of mariachi musicians in film history.

Cultural Considerations. While Mexico is much more than merely *mariachi*, it is the decorative *charro* suits, wide-brimmed sombreros, and dramatic serenades of the *son* singers that have come to characterize Mexican music to the outside world.

The origin of the term *mariachi* is unknown. One popular theory is that the term is a corruption of the French term *mariage* (meaning marriage), because the music was frequently found at weddings and other festive events. Others believe the name comes from an indigenous word referring to a type of social event that features dancers stomping on a wooden platform. Whatever the etymology of its name, *mariachi* first appeared in the southwestern state of Jalisco.

Various instruments found in *mariachi*, such as the violin, harp, and guitar, were originally brought by Spanish missionaries for use in church services but soon became common in secular musical activities as well. The early *mariachi* bands were primarily string bands, with the violin as the dominant melodic instrument. The harp was originally a principal instrument accompanying the violin, but with the addition of trumpets to the ensemble, the *vihuela*, *guitarrón*, and other guitars became the instruments of choice in part because they could be played with greater volume. The inclusion of the trumpet also encouraged the use of several violins in an ensemble, so that today it is common to see *mariachi* orchestras that include a dozen or more performers.

Early *mariachi* groups played primarily for festive events and in restaurants and taverns. These contexts are still common places in which to find *mariachi* music, as well as for private functions. Musicians serenade their patrons with the expectation that they will be paid for each song they perform. During the 1940s–1950s, *mariachi* reached its peak of popularity, as it was the featured music in a number of Hollywood films set in Mexico, as well as films from Mexico itself. As a result, the elaborately decorated *charro* suits and sombreros presented in these films have become the standard dress for *mariachi* musicians throughout

A *mariachi* (note instruments in background) mass at the Roman Catholic cathedral in Cuernavaca, Mexico



the country. In addition to these secular functions, *mariachi* has become common in many religious settings as well, including masses, communions, weddings, and even funerals. From about 1959 *mariachi* masses became prominent, especially at the Cathedral of Cuernavaca, a center for Liberation Theology.

Audiences in the United States temporarily lost interest in the music of Latin America following the appearance of rock 'n' roll, and thus *mariachi*, like *tango*, mostly slipped off the radar screen as far as North Americans were concerned. The most prominent North American pop star to promote *mariachi* in recent years has been Linda Ronstadt, whose album *Canciones de Mi Padre* (1987) includes many *ranchera* songs, *ranchera* being a style of *mariachi* that emphasizes vocal performance.

Questions to Consider

1. To what extent do each of the musics in this chapter reflect pre-Columbian, European, or African musical traits?
2. How does *siku* performance reflect community cohesion among Andean populations?
3. How does *tango* music reflect the essence of *tango* dance?

- 4. Is *capoeira* a dance or a martial art? Why might it be considered both?
- 5. How does *mariachi* affirm or challenge American stereotypes of Mexican culture?
- 6. How is the survival of indigenous music and culture related to the challenges of modernization and environmental degradation?

On Your Own Time

Visit the textbook website to find these resources for further exploration on your own.

The Amazon Rainforest

Book: Seeger, Anthony. *Why Suyá Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004.
<http://www.press.uillinois.edu/books/catalog/74ncw8sx9780252072024.html>

Book: Olsen, Dale. *Music of the Warao of Venezuela: Song People of the Rain Forest*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996.
<http://www.upf.com/book.asp?id=OLSENS96>

Audio: *Ritual Music of the Kayapó-Xikrin, Brazil*. Smithsonian-Folkways: SFW40433, 1995.
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/albumdetails.aspx?itemid=2352>

DVD: *Children of the Amazon*. Dir. Denise Zmekhol. ZD Films, 2010.
<http://www.childrenoftheamazon.com/>

Internet: Popular Artists from the Amazon Region
Marlui Miranda
Mawaca

Peru

Book: Turino, Thomas. *Moving Away from Silence: Music of the Peruvian Altiplano and the Experience of Urban Migration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
<http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/M/bo3643710.html>

Book: Mendoza, Zoila. *Shaping Society through Dance: Mestizo Ritual Performance in the Peruvian Andes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
<http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/S/bo3641137.html>

Book: Olsen, Dale. *Music of El Dorado: The Ethnomusicology of Ancient South American Cultures*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002.
<http://www.upf.com/book.asp?id=OLSENS02>

Audio: *Mountain Music of Peru*. Vol. 2. Smithsonian Folkways: SFW40406, 1994.
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/albumdetails.aspx?itemid=2321>

Website: Music from the Andes
<http://boleadora.com/andes.htm>

Website: The Incas
<http://incas.homestead.com/>

Internet: Popular Artists from the Andes