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**QUEENSLAND CONSERVATORIUM,
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY.**

**COLOMBIAN *BAMBUCO*: THE EVOLUTION OF A
NATIONAL MUSIC STYLE**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a description and analysis of the Colombian *bambuco*, an autochthonous dance and song genre, as a tricultural musical form. Identifying the *bambuco* as a distinctive genre firstly within Colombian national music and then within the Colombian Andean region, a primary analysis studies its various ensemble contexts and identifies an archetypal rhythmic structure for the *bambuco's* melody and accompaniment. The analysis proceeds seeking to identify relationships which may exist between the *bambuco* and Amerindian, Spanish and Black African sources. The principal tools for the traditionally problematic identification of the *bambuco's* Black African roots are:

1. the original hypothesis that African rhythmic bell patterns in the form of '*clave* patterns' can occur in the melodic rhythm of Afro-American genres when they do not necessarily occur in the rhythmic accompaniment, and
2. Afro-American *clave* patterns can all be traced to the same African principle of 'rhythmic oddity' as described by Arom (1991, 248).

The identification of the *bambuco* with such *clave* patterns is then shown to provide possible solutions for the traditionally equally problematic question of its notation.

The thesis opens with a general introduction and literature review. The introduction discusses the overall approach to the topic, including its aims, methodology and limitations, and theoretical considerations which are relevant to the study. A background to Colombia's history and geography in as far as this relates to its musical heritage is developed in the second chapter. This then focuses on regional musical genres, isolating the Colombia's distinctive Andean music and then distinguishes the *bambuco* itself as the subject of study for the thesis. Chapter Three details the history of the *bambuco* critically evaluating the influence it has exerted and has been subject to in a chronological sense as it develops its own identity and becomes an internationally recognised genre. Its demise as an expression of the people is documented and the possible reasons for this are considered.

An analysis of the ensembles which characteristically perform *bambucos* is undertaken giving detailed information concerning the instruments in these ensembles and the particular rôle that each of these performs in these ensembles. Subsequently an analysis of a number of vocal and instrumental *bambucos* is carried out with the aim of distinguishing particular or characteristic elements that could identify the *bambuco* within the environment of Colombian Andean music. This analysis is developed by examining the phrase structure of certain *bambucos*, and surveying

the degree to which certain rhythmic phrases occur, and if variations can be related in a specific way to any basic rhythmic patterns. Through this analysis an archetypal rhythmic structure is identified within the melody and the accompaniment of the *bambuco* which is sufficient to rhythmically identify certain basic phrases.

The thesis then begins an investigation of the tricultural elements of the *bambuco*, examining firstly its relationship with the Colombian Amerindian culture, then with the Hispanic and thirdly with links to Black African culture. These examinations are carried out taking into consideration social, musical and technical aspects of the artistic tendencies of these cultures. Technical and musical information derived from Chapter Four is used in this comparison which is dealt with from the point of view of the likelihood, based on social information, that there could be a relationship between the *bambuco* and these cultures, direct musical comparison where this may be possible and by comparing musical environments to test the *bambuco* as a possible representative of its potentially composing cultures. Conclusions are drawn on the basis of the findings of this cultural comparison and this is applied to such considerations as the cultural classification of the *bambuco* and practical aspects such as its notation.

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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this work is original and has not been previously submitted in whole or part by me or any other person for any qualification or award. I further certify that due acknowledgement is given to the sources of information and ideas derived from the original scholarship of others, and that to the best of my ability all scholarly conventions and proprieties have been observed in the use, citation and documentation of such sources.

(Signed)

John Varney

(Date)

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