

## RELATIONSHIP WITH AFRICAN INFLUENCE

### **The Issue**

If the notation of the *bambuco* has been described as the “most delicate problem” (Restrepo 1987, 43), this is probably with reference to the musicians who are required to compose, arrange, transcribe and read it. However among writers who are more concerned with the history, social rôle and cultural aspects of the *bambuco*, certainly the most controversial issue has been that of the degree to which Black African culture has participated in the evolution and development of the genre.

Whereas musicological research such as that of Pardo Tovar (1961) and musical analysis of a technical nature (Uribe Bueno, contributing to Restrepo 1987) has had a relatively open disposition towards the principle of relationships existing between the *bambuco* and Colombian music of evident Black African origin<sup>1</sup>, many of the principal authors who have written about the *bambuco* in more general terms (Añez 1952, Koorn 1977, Davidson 1970 and Restrepo 1987) adopted positions which admitted no connection whatsoever between the two. As Koorn principally reproduced Añez’s arguments, Davidson summarised and expanded upon these and Restrepo largely summarised Davidson’s arguments, it will be sufficient to chiefly consider the opposition to the idea of Black African influence from Davidson’s point of view. Before discussing this evidence it will be opportune to briefly establish the historical background to the Black African presence in Colombia.

### **History of Black African presence and culture in Colombia**

According to Davis (1993, 49), the first importation of Black African slaves took place at the very beginning of the Spanish conquest as the conquistadors and colonial officials brought black slaves for their personal use with the permission of the Spanish Crown. The principal motivation for the traffic in slaves was the enormous earnings to be reaped from such a trade - estimated at around 4000% profit. The existence and extent of this trade meant that the slavers ships could then be used as a basis for, and to give financial stability to, all classes of trading (Davidson 1970a, 174-5).

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<sup>1</sup> Both authors relate the bambuco to Black culture genres from Colombia’s Pacific Coast.

Davis (1993, 49-50) distinguishes three specific periods which correspond to stages in the importation of Black slaves to Colombia.

- i. The slave trade was loosely regulated through licences granted to individuals.
- ii. The *asientos*, a system of subcontracting which delegated the provision of slaves to competing commercial companies, took charge of the importation of slaves. The supervision of the *asientos* system was enforced by the Spanish Crown.
- iii. onwards. In this period the slave trade became unrestricted.
- iv. The abolition of slavery in Colombia began in 1812 with its prohibition in Cartagena, but this did not become effective on a national scale until 1852.

Davidson's research (1970a, 175-6) has shown that as early as 1500 the slave trade was in progress and that between 1503 and 1511 a small number of slaves were sent to America. It would appear that initially the slaves were used as personal servants, then as military conscripts to fight against the Amerindians and later to work in mines (Davidson 1970a, 175-178). An estimate suggests that 100,000 slaves were imported into Colombia under the licence system between 1510 and 1595 (Davis 1993, 49). German, French, Portuguese, Dutch and English companies participated in the *asiento* system which was dominated by the Portuguese (Davis 1993, 49). During this second period, Cartagena became a depot for distribution of slaves to other parts of the Caribbean. Davis (1993, 49) estimates that over 450,000 slaves were authorised during this period, of whom 130,000 to 180,000 were probably processed through Cartagena and of whom about 54,000 were left in Colombia by the end of the eighteenth century. This does not take into account any illegal smuggling of slaves which is likely to have been significant. The regions which principally employed the slaves were the Atlantic and Caribbean Coasts and the Cauca Valley. Slaves were disembarked principally in Cartagena and Santa Marta (Atlantic Coast) for the Caribbean region and Buenaventura (Pacific Coast) for the Cauca region, although some slaves seem to have been brought overland from Cartagena to the Cauca region (Davidson 1970a, 175-6). Davidson (1970a, 176-178) cites places in Africa from where slaves were brought together with the approximate time of their appearance (where available):

- From Portuguese colonies in West Africa:
- Angola in 1603.
- Guinea (which corresponds to present day Senegal and Gambia) in about 1605.
- Cape Verde Islands around the same period.

From other places, or tribal groups, in Africa listed in alphabetical order:

- the nation of Anchicos.
- Arará (who came from Dahomey in 1609).
- Arda (island).

- Bambara (from upper Senegal).
- Bran, in 1604.
- Carabalíes o Caravalíes (who came from the Calabar Coast).
- Cetre.
- Congo (in 1603).
- Chamba (from the north of the Ashanti, on the Gold Coast).
- Ethiopia.
- Guagui (from Niger).
- Loanda, around 1605.
- Locumí or Lucumí (who were Yorubas from Nigeria, in 1609).
- Machaguas (in 1609)
- Mandingas (from French Sudan).
- Minas (from Fanti territory close to Dahomey. This surname is found in Colombia in 1743).
- Mondongo (from Congo, at the head of the Lisala river).
- Monguiolos.
- Sasinga (in 1609).
- Santo Tomé (island).
- Viafara, (or Biafra). The surname Biáfara is found in the Robles area in the Valle region.
- Zape (bolanco cast, around 1605).

Davidson concludes his summary of slave movement in Colombia citing an unspecified source that:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>El más grande número de negros se encuentra en las provincias marítimas. Aquellas de Antioquia, Magdalena, Cauca, Guayaquil y del Chocó, encierran muchos.</p> | <p>The biggest number of blacks is in the maritime provinces. Those of Antioquia, Magdalena, Cauca, Guayaquil and Chocó contain many.</p> |
|---|---|

As the slave trade was one of New Granada's major economic activities, second only to the mining industry which was the main activity for which the slaves were imported, the slave population of the colony was a product of the general trade itself and so represented all the major African slave regions. In the Pacific West and Cauca areas, Africans were used to work mines from the very beginning of their establishment. Bermúdez (1987a, 113) indicates that, at least in this region, the Africans were given "humane treatment" including days of rest on

Sundays and religious holidays. Religious instruction was given through the *encomienda* system and later through missionary activities, based on the *cabildos*, the internal tribal cells of the Africans. The *cabildos*, which gave African tribal groups a certain degree of cultural freedom, have continued to the present day. The tribal names of descendants of Africans who live in the Cauca and Pacific West areas which have persisted to the present day as surnames, and which include Arará, Lucumí, Carabalí among others, indicate West African origins, Guinea in particular (Bermúdez 1987a, 114).

Triana (n.d., 305) notes how the African slave communities in Colombia were intentionally separated, mixed and sent to different areas of the colony to avoid the formation of strong *cabildos* that could rival colonial authority in local areas. A consequence of this action was that musical elements from widely separated regions in Africa combined in specific areas of concentrated African population in Colombia. For example a research paper by the present author showed how, based on information from List (1983), musical instruments from diverse regions of Africa were combined in Colombian *cúmbia* ensembles of the Atlantic Coastal region (Varney 1994, 5). This can be observed in the following map.

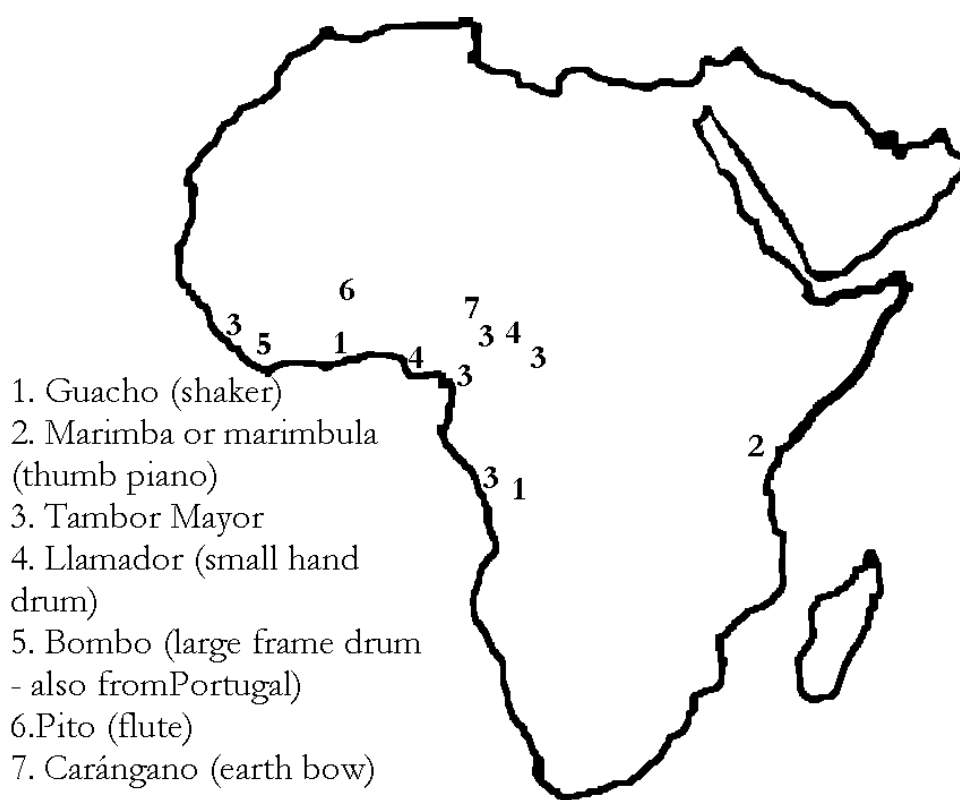


Fig. 7-1 Diverse places of origin in Africa of some instruments used in ensembles associated with the Colombian *cúmbia* (Varney 1994, 5)

For this reason, when investigating possible African roots for the *bambuco* a pan-African approach may be valid, at the same time as seeking links with specific regions or tribal groups. Nketia (1979, 12) notes that African music can be examined from two perspectives: 1) that of aspects shared on a continental or regional basis, or by societies which are geographically separated, but which share cultural elements, and 2) that of specialisations which musically

distinguish ethnic groups. Such an approach is also supported by Jones (1959) and Arom (1991). Consequently, as in the comparison between Spanish sources and the *bambuco*, elements of African music will be sought which may have participated in and contributed to the evolution of the *bambuco*, rather than seeking a specific African genre which may have emerged intact in Colombia. From an African viewpoint, Nketia notes that: “the term ‘African music’ refers to any music - whether it is made by the Yoruba in Nigeria or a religious cult group in Bahia, Cuba or Jamaica . . . - which utilises African sound sources, structural principles and procedures common to traditional African societies” (1979, 12).

### Clave

Before considering the overall question of specific relationships between elements of African music and the *bambuco*, the concept of clave should be introduced. Nketia (1979,14) describes bell or wood block patterns, along with drumming rhythms, sonority patterns and call and response traditions as constituents of structure which identify the African idiom within its stylistic continuity and creativity. These may be seen as among the means by which the African idiom may be recognised in Afro-American music. Such African bell and wood block patterns are described in the Latin American musical context as clave (literally ‘key’ as in door key but also carrying the meaning of the key to a code; ‘Morse code’ is *clave Morse*). Clave is also the name for one of a pair of woodblocks used to mark such rhythmic patterns.



*Fig. 7-2 Pair of cylindrical woodblocks described as claves.*

Clave patterns establish the rhythmic basis of many Latin American musical forms and so need to be understood in this context. The clave pattern on which a piece of music is based determines the phrasing of the melody while the accompanying rhythmic accompaniment is usually a cyclic pattern based on a standard 2, 3 or 4 beat bar. The clave pattern is usually present in the accompaniment played, as in the case of salsa music, on a pair of claves, although at times the pattern may be incorporated into the rhythmic figures played by one or more of the instruments in the accompanying ensemble. The implications of clave phrasing in salsa music are well analysed by Washburne (1998, 160-185).

### **Afro-Latin syncretic rhythms based on African bell-patterns and their appearance and modification in Latin-American musical styles**

The aim of this section is to discuss and clarify the rôle of clave patterns in Latin American music to then apply these principles to the *bambuco* which has never before been considered as a clave based genre as it is composed and performed without any reference to clave or bell patterns of any description. In fact no evidence exists, prior to this thesis, for any reference ever having been made to such patterns with respect to the *bambuco* by any author or musician involved in Colombian Andean music. It will demonstrate the hypothesis of this author that Afro-Latin syncretic rhythms based on African bell-patterns and related rhythmic patterns are incorporated into the melodic rhythms of styles which may appear to be of Euro-American origin, such as the saraband and the habanera, even though such rhythmic characteristics are not necessarily present in their accompaniments. It will also consider the elasticity of these bell patterns, showing how, in the case of the Cuban habanera and *rumba*, a bell-pattern in triple time became the basis of a rhythm in duple time. As the concept of clave and its relationship to bell patterns is virtually unknown beyond the environment of musicians involved in the performance of salsa dance music, its importance is considerably underestimated so it is necessary to devote a section of this chapter to it. Its relevance to the *bambuco* lies in the fact that, according to the hypothesis of this author, these African bell-patterns may be relevant to the rhythmic structure of the melody in archetypal *bambucos*. This view will be reinforced if it can be shown that there are other examples of such an occurrence in styles of music which shared similar sources of African influence.

The conservation of Black African culture in the Spanish colonies of Latin America was facilitated by the existence of an institution called the *cabildo*. *Cabildos* were established under an ancient Spanish law dating from Roman times which established the bases on which Castilian municipal government evolved in the Middle Ages (Pérez 1991: 101). An extension of this principle permitted religious institutions and, by extension, foreign cultures living in Spain to form their own organisations for the purpose of administering mutual aid and assistance within their communities (Vuyesteke n.d.: 15). Religious orders were permitted to set up their own *cabildos* (Cabildo 1985, 245) as did Black African communities living in Spain (Vuyesteke n.d.: 15). When Black Africans were transported to the New World by the Spanish, they were, under the terms of the same traditions, able to set up *cabildos* there according to the traditions of their cultures of origin in Africa. Within these cultural associations, they were able to maintain the musical traditions of their different tribes of origin (Vuyesteke n.d.: 15).

The Afro-American musical traditions which can most easily be associated with African origins are those which have maintained the use of clave or bell patterns. Many African

rhythms are based on fixed rhythmic patterns set by a bell like instrument. In general this instrument will repeat an ostinato which may be accompanied by other instruments which play complementary ostinati and others which elaborate distinct patterns related to the basic pattern but composed of different time cells. One of these such patterns is that which Jones (1971, 3) refers to as the “African Signature Tune.” He refers to it in this manner because of its ubiquitousness within different African cultures.

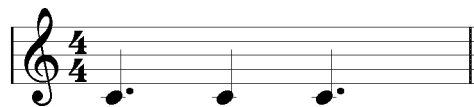


*Fig. 7-3 The African bell - pattern described by A. M. Jones (1971, 3) as the “African signature tune.”*

Simha Arom (1991, 248) analyses these patterns with reference to music from the Central African Republic, showing that some are built upon patterns based around sequences of two and three beats. These sequences build up in a well-defined manner, following the formula

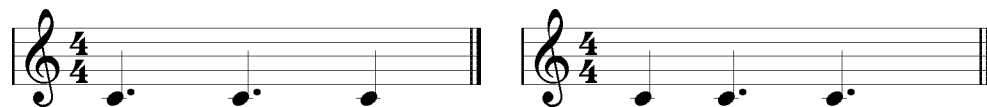
$$3+[(n+1) \times 2]+3+[(n) \times 2],$$

where **n** is an integer. The application of this formula gives, as examples, the following rhythmic patterns, as they would be notated in standard European notation:



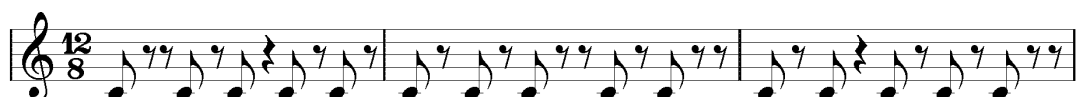
*Fig. 7-4 8 beats: 3+2+3 (n=0)*

As African rhythms are cyclic in nature the following configurations of three beat and two beat notes are the rhythmic equivalents of that shown in Fig. 7-4:



*Fig. 7-5 Alternative configurations of 8 beats: 3+2+3 (n=0) may also be 3+3+2 or 2+3+3.*

Similarly different equivalent examples of rhythmic cells based on other values for **n** exist:



*Fig. 7-6 12 beats: 3+2+3+2+2 (n=1), shown here also as 2+2+3+2+3 and 2+3+2+2+3.*



Fig. 7-7 **16 beats:** 3+2+2+3+2+2+2+2 ( $n=2$ ), and as 2+2+2+3+2+2+3

These patterns have a strong association with the cultural groups from which slaves were taken to the American and Caribbean colonies, and can still be heard played in recordings from the sub-Sahara area of West Africa (Ladzekpo 1969). Among many African tribal groups, such patterns are played on pairs of joined iron bells.



Fig. 7-8 Pair of joined iron bells used to play bell patterns in Africa.

As music based on these patterns came into contact with European cultures, new syncretic musical forms developed in different periods and in distinct manners. There exist examples of such forms which have retained sufficiently strong relationships with these original patterns for links to be established between them. Three of these are the saraband, the habanera and the Cuban *rumba*.

### Saraband

Hudson (1984: 406) states that the first documented reference to the saraband was by Fernando Guzmán Mejía in 1539 in Panama (also Stevenson 1968b: 310). Early references underline its lascivious character. Diego Durán refers to its existence prior to 1579 and to its being the epitome of lewdness (Stevenson 1968b: 228) while Rosas de Oquendo describes it in 1598 as the invention of the devil to seduce even stone statues to acts of vice (Stevenson 1968b, 228). For these reasons it was banned in Spain in 1583. It is documented in France as the “mad saraband” in 1605 and as a dance inspired by American savages in 1613 (Stevenson 1968b, 229-230). Described in England as the “bawdy Saraband” in 1625 it was even banned in distant Goa in 1606 (Stevenson 1968b, 229-230). Under the terms of its ban in Spain, the severity of which



implies that it was extremely popular at this time, singing or reciting the saraband was punishable with two hundred lashes, with an additional six years in the galleys for men and exile from the kingdom for women (Sachs 1963: 367). However it achieved great popularity in that country as a *baile* (popular dance) which it retained until being superseded in the early seventeenth century by the *chacóna*. During the baroque period it was incorporated in Europe into the suite form. The earliest written representation of the saraband is a tablature by Girolamo Montesardo, published in 1606, which demonstrates a clear defined alternation of  $\frac{6}{8}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  bars (See Fig. 7-9).

Fig. 7-9 The first published Saraband, by Girolamo Montesardo (Hudson 1984, 489-490)

Even though the rhythmic composition varied within  $\frac{3}{4}$  tempo, at some stage it became formalised into the following rhythmic scheme:

Fig. 7-10 A popular configuration of the basic rhythm of the saraband.

This rhythmic pattern is exemplified in sarabands by Muffat, Lully and Purcell. At this point one might ask if this evolution in the notation of the saraband represents a stylistic development or does it indicate a gradual increase in comprehension of the true nature of the form?

That the saraband arrived in Europe from America is well documented (Hudson 1984, 406-7; Stevenson 1968b, 228-30), but does it have more distant roots?

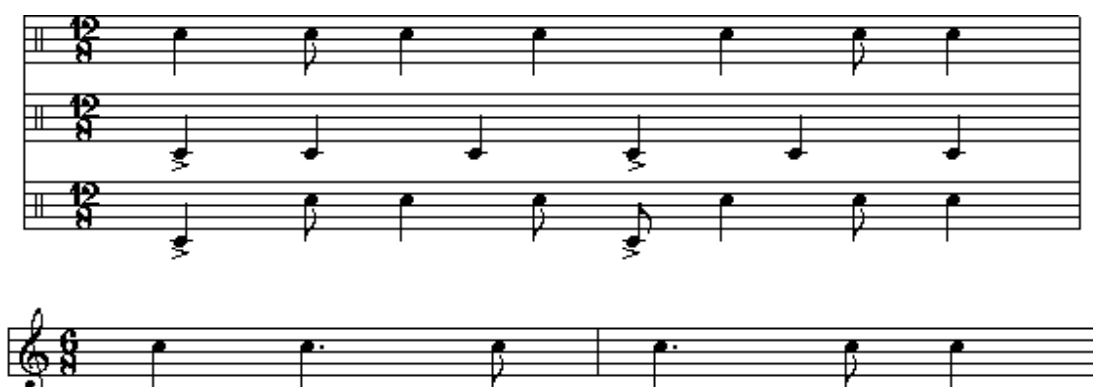
An appearance of the term 'sarabanda' which is independent of the above description is that associated with the Cuban Palo Monte cult. This particular cult originates from the Congo area of Africa, which corresponds to present day Zaïre, Angola and the Republic of Congo. In Cuba, as in many American cultures, the combination of European religious concepts with those of the slaves brought from Africa led to the formation of syncretic religious groups in which European images and names were given to African deities. In Cuba this is referred to as *santería*, a word which is based on the root word *santo* (holy), and could be approximately described as meaning 'holy-ish stuff.' The Palo Monte cult is one which exists beside the *santería* cult and is

more concerned with curses, mischief-making and what could be called black magic (Alvarez 1996). In this cult Sarabanda means “the power of God” and is also referred to as “Siete Rayos” (seven lightning bolts) (Alvarez 1996). In this context of syncretism with Christian beliefs, Sarabanda is identified with St Peter and is invoked together with other African deities including Luleno (St Lazarus) and Nsasi (St Barbara) while cult musicians play music which is based on a ‘bell pattern with drums’ configuration characteristic of many styles of West African music. The principal rhythmic elements of this music are shown in Fig. 7-11.



*Fig. 7-11 Principal rhythmic elements of music used to invoke Sarabanda in a Cuban Palo Monte ceremony.*

Even though the basic rhythmic structure of the European saraband has many forms and varieties, the format used by Lully, Moffat and others as described above is compatible with this African-based Palo Monte rhythm (see Fig. 7-12).



*Fig. 7-12 Rhythmic patterns associated with the Palo Monte 'Sarabanda' and the baroque saraband.*

In Fig. 7-12 the top two lines show the bell pattern and principal drum pattern of the Palo Monte Sarabanda rhythm respectively. The third line shows their resultant rhythm and the fourth a formalised rhythmic structure of many Baroque sarabands. This rhythmic figure also appeared as an Afro-Hispanic rhythm described by Hamilton (1937, 55) as the *tononé* rhythm (see chapter 6).

How much of a relationship can be established between the saraband and Black-African roots? As has been stated, its Latin-American origins are widely accepted (Hudson 1984, 489;

Stevenson 1968b, 226; Sachs 1937, 367). Its rhythmic roots would thus be presumed to potentially be some combination of European, African and Amerindian source material.

Black Africans lived in Spain from long before the conquest of the New World and travelled with Cortéz to New Spain (Ortiz 1952, 239-240). By 1553 there were more people of Black African origin than Spanish in Mexico. Curt Sachs, implied not only Latin American origins for the saraband but Negroid influence as well by including it in a discussion on the acceptance of Afro-American dances such as the tango and the cake-walk by European society (1937,444). As stated, the dance was banned in Spain in 1583 as obscene. Many African dances were so considered by Europeans, particularly those associated with religious rites. For example the *fôfa*, a dance introduced to Lisbon in the late eighteenth century, is described as: “ . . . a dance so lascivious that decency blushes at witnessing it . . . (Dezoteux, Voyage en Portugal cited in Gallop 1933, 204)”

Edoardo Vidossich (1975, 17-18) explains how the reiterated rhythms of the music which accompanies these rites produce a state in which:

. . . the vision becomes hallucinatory due to the extraordinary exaltation of the imagination and the memory, and the cerebral activity becomes inhibited. The Western mentality generally rejects such manifestations considering them barbarous and immodest.

Even though it cannot be expected that the dances brought back to Spain were reproductions of these religious rites, it is reasonable to expect that they would be imitations of some movements or stylistic aspects, which were still sufficient to shock. As the Amerindians' were generally reserved in comparison with European standards (see chapter 5), and the Europeans could not be expected to be so dismayed by something which came from their own culture, it may be concluded that the shocking element in this dance came from the remaining potentially contributive culture, the African. The fact that most of the chanting involved in the Palo Monte ceremonies is in African dialect further demonstrates that the rites have changed little in 400 or 500 years and so the rhythmic elements currently used are those which have always accompanied them. This leads to the deduction that most probable explanation for the existence of compatibilities between the European saraband's rhythmic structure and the Palo Monte rhythms are because they are indeed related.

The etymology of the word Saraband as Sarabanda (St. Peter in the Palo Monte ceremony) adds further weight to this argument. Sachs was at a loss to explain the etymology of the Spanish

word *zarabanda* (1937, 367). He notes that there is a Guatemalan flute which bears this name and suggests this as a possible origin, noting that many dances have taken the name of an accompanying instrument, but never has an instrument taken the name of a dance (1937, 369). This is not strictly true, as one finds conga drums and *kroncong* guitars. The word *zarabanda* is quite common as a musical term in Guatemala. *Zarabanda* was the name of a now extinct Guatemalan ensemble which played repertoire similar to that played by Colombian string trio of *bandola*, *tiple* and guitar (O'Brien 1984, 570). This repertoire has now been taken over by marimba ensembles (Orellana, 1995). In the Spanish language the term has retained some of its early bawdy links, being used in 1936 to describe drunken dance parties in Guatemala (Bunzell, 1952: 85) and as referring to loud, confused or bothersome noise in Spain (Zarabanda 1985: 1499). These meanings would conform with the Spanish perception of African tribal rites.

Although there is no direct description of the steps of the saraband, Sachs cites a statement by Giambattista Marino in 1623, which defines the saraband and the *chacona* as fundamentally being the same. A nineteenth century four beat dance step known as *pas de chacon* describes the rapid crossing of the feet finishing with a high kick and a full turn of the body. Such steps are found nowhere in European or Amerindian folk-dances, while very similar movements to these can still be seen in dancing in contemporary Africa, as in Benoit Lamy's film from Zaïre, *La vie est belle* (1987) and in dances of confirmed African origin, as exemplified by the Brazilian samba.

In summary it may be stated that:

- The African origins of the Palo Monte cult music dedicated to Sarabanda
- The similarities between the rhythms of this music and that of a widely accepted form of the European Saraband,
- The attributed connection between the European Saraband and tri-cultural Latin-American music
- The fact that two bar rhythmic figures similar to those shown in Fig. 7-12 are common in rhythms of African origin but virtually non-existent in European folk rhythms (The Bohemian *furiant* is an exception) and
- The etymology of the word 'saraband'

provide evidence in support of the recognition of the Saraband as an example of an African bell or clave rhythm appearing in a melodic context.

There are many sarabands which do not conform to the rhythmic pattern shown Fig. 7-11 and Fig. 7-12 but this fact can easily be attributed to the superficiality of many of those who attempted to imitate or reproduce this musical form. Even in the contemporary musical environment, accurate and respectful representations of Latin American music are very rare. One example of this is that the Spanish *rumba* is really a version of the Cuban son (rather than the Cuban *rumba*), in which the two bar rhythmic cycle of the latter is reduced to a one bar cycle in the former.

### The Habanera

Habanera means a dance from La Habana (Havana, Cuba). Slonimsky cites its appearance in Havana in about 1825 as a derivative of the Spanish *contradanza* and *danza* (1945, 56). As such its original name was *danza habanera*, which became abbreviated to *habanera*. As the abolition of slavery in the Spanish colonies had not then taken place, it might be expected that the degree to which Afro-American music could have established its identity would have been limited to its ability to influence European forms. The habanera is a polyrhythmic fusion of two distinct rhythms. The first is what Cubans call a *seis por ocho*, (8) which refers not so much to a time signature as to a specific secular Afro-Cuban rhythm of which the basic bell pattern is generally as follows:



Fig. 7-13 Cuban Afro seis por ocho bell pattern.

or

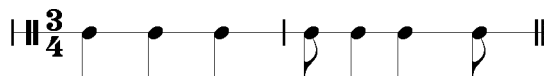


Fig. 7-14 Alternative pattern for afro seis por ocho.

This rhythm coincides exactly with Jones' "African signature tune."

The second is the European contra-dance rhythm:



Fig. 7-15 The rhythmic basis of the European contra-dance.

The resultant combination can be seen in Fig. 7-16.

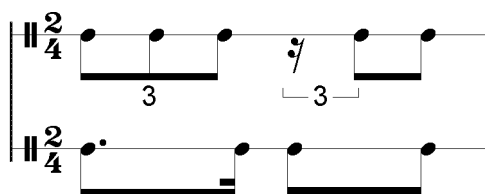


Fig. 7-16 The combination of rhythms that make up the rhythmic structure of the danza habanera.

Most European habaneras reduce the  $\frac{6}{8}$  part of the rhythm to a simpler structure:

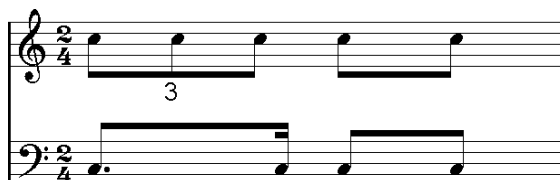


Fig. 7-17 The habanera rhythm as simplified by composers such as Saint Saëns and Bizet.

As the habanera is no longer played as a folk style, there remain few examples which actually represent the full  $\frac{6}{8}:\frac{2}{4}$  polyrhythm. One which comes close to doing this is the Tango by Albeniz (Fig. 7-18), in which the composer emulates the syncopation of the *seis por ocho* in bar 5 by placing two grace notes in the middle of the bar which delay the fifth note of the *seis por ocho* pattern.

## Tango

(from "España" Op. 165, No. 2)

Isaac Albeniz  
(1860-1909)



Fig. 7-18 The opening bars of Albeniz's 'Tango.'

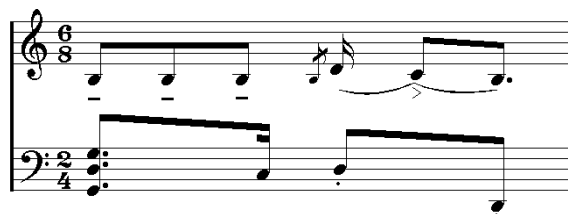


Fig. 7-19 The fifth bar of Albeniz's 'Tango' re-written as a seis por ocho pattern.

The classification of the habanera as a *seis por ocho* rhythm is common knowledge to Cuban musicians (Herrera 1994, Alvarez 1995), but this is almost incomprehensible to a non-Cuban, as the triplet part of the rhythm is regarded as a stylisation over the basic  $\frac{2}{4}$  pattern, which is heard as the definitive rhythm. However to the Cuban musician, the  $\frac{6}{8}$  melodic rhythm and its polyrhythmic association with the  $\frac{2}{4}$  bass line together constitute the form's identity. The Venezuelan musician Huáscar Barradas (1993, 9) expresses the opinion that the Colombian *bambuco* is derived from the Cuban habanera. If one accepts the habanera as being in  $\frac{2}{4}$  this would appear very strange (as the *bambuco* is in  $\frac{3}{4}$ ). However the combination of the Cuban *seis por ocho* with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  accompaniment is completely compatible with the *bambuco*'s rhythmic composition; it can be observed in Fig. 7-20 how the rhythmic structure of the *bambuco* characteristic melodic phrase coincides with that of the *seis por ocho* clave pattern and how the bass notes of the guitar establish a  $\frac{3}{4}$  rhythmic accompaniment:

**6x8 pattern**

**3 4 bass line**

**Bandola**

**Guitar**

Fig. 7-20 The theoretical combination of a Cuban  $\frac{6}{8}$  rhythm with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  accompaniment (upper two staves) compared with the basic bambuco rhythmic structure (lower two staves).

In the Cuban habanera the  $\frac{6}{8}$  part is represented exclusively in the melody in examples such as the one by Albeniz. With time, the triplet of the first part of the bar, under the influence of the  $\frac{2}{4}$  bass line, became binarised creating a  $\frac{2}{4}$  pattern, while the application of an African pattern  $\frac{2}{4}$  (Arom 1991, 248), similar to the habanera's  $\frac{2}{4}$ , led the bass line to drop its strong beat on the second beat of the bar, becoming  $\frac{2}{4}$  (Fig. 7-21), which is called a *trecillo* (triplet) in Cuba.

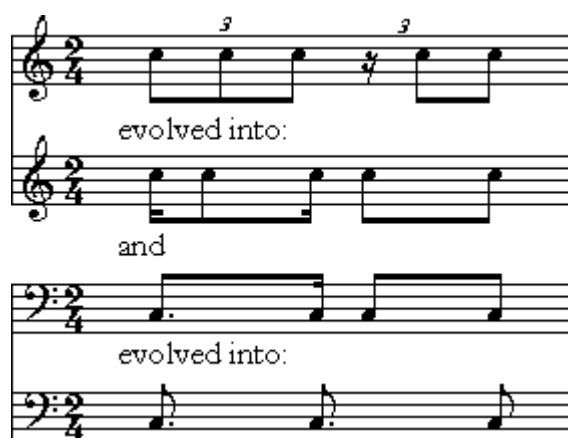


Fig. 7-21 Alterations of the basic patterns of the habanera.

A supplementary rhythm then formed through the sub-division of the *trecillo* figure into what is called the *quintillo* (quintuplet) (Fig. 7-22).



Fig. 7-22 The rhythmic figure described in Cuban music as quintillo.

These resultant rhythmic patterns (Fig. 7-22 and Fig. 7-22) formed the basis of the *danzón*, the prototype of many subsequent Cuban popular dance forms. As the habanera is a style which is often played without rhythmic accompaniment, it is another example of how a rhythmic pattern became represented in the melody of a song or dance form.

There are many other examples of this occurrence. In one of the most famous Latin American songs, 'Garôta de Ipanema,' a bossa nova with minimal percussive accompaniment, the melody imitates the playing of the *a-gogô* bells in a samba percussion ensemble:



Fig. 7-23 Excerpt from 'Garôta de Ipanema' by A. C. Jobim (Aebersold 1984, 1).

Many songs in the blues, rhythm and blues and rock and roll area of Afro-American music and its derivatives feature melodic elements which have clearly been moulded by an African clave pattern which is not present in the percussive accompaniment.



"Spoonful" by Willie Dixon. version by Cream Polydor CD 539 001-2



Excerpt from "Please Mr. Postman" (Dobbin/Garrett/Garman/Brianbert).

Transcribed by J. Varney.



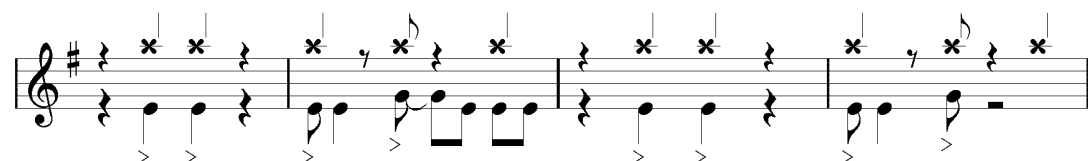
Excerpt from "Satisfaction" (Jagger/Richards).

Transcribed by J. Varney.



Excerpt from "Blue Suede Shoes" (Perkins).

Transcribed by J. Varney.



Excerpt from "Rock around the clock" (De Knight/Freedman).

Transcribed by J. Varney



*Fig. 7-24 Some songs related to blues, rhythm and blues and rock and roll which feature melodic elements that have clearly been moulded by an African clave pattern which does not feature in the accompaniment.*

## Rumba

The Cuban *rumba* represents a very different manner in which an African clave pattern was transformed. When the liberation of slaves occurred in Cuba in 1886, the ex-slaves moved to the outskirts of the cities and began to create their own urban communities. Many manuals on Afro-Cuban rhythmic styles see a later combining of the  $\frac{6}{8}$  bell-pattern based rhythms with urban  $\frac{2}{4}$  rhythms such as those of the *contradanza* and the *habanera* as the source for new clave patterns such as the *son* and the *rumba*. In these new rhythms the bell pattern ostinato is played on wooden claves. However whereas in the case of the development of the *habanera* a single

$\frac{6}{8}$  cycle corresponded to a single  $\frac{2}{4}$  cycle (see Fig. 7-16), in this second rhythmic transformation the  $\frac{6}{8}$  cycle corresponds to two  $\frac{2}{4}$  cycles.

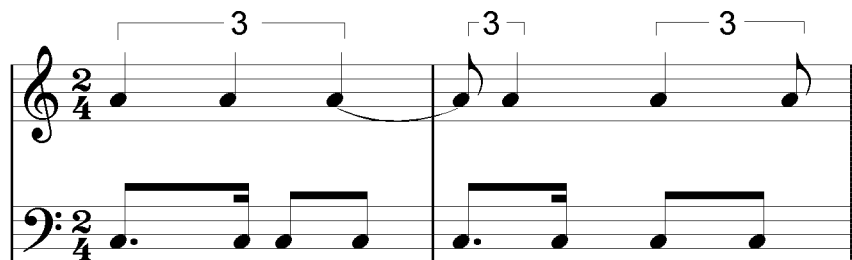


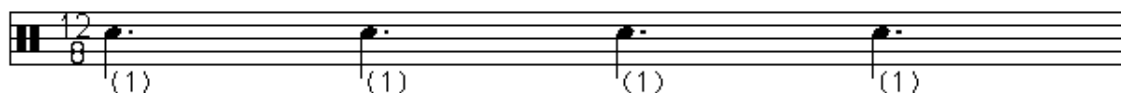
Fig. 7-25 The combination of the  $\frac{6}{8}$  clave pattern with two  $\frac{2}{4}$  bars.

This could be attributed to the acceleration of the  $\frac{2}{4}$  rhythms with respect to the traditional African bell patterns between when the habanera and the *rumba* were formed. Mauleón (1993, 51-2) attributes the fusion of these rhythms to a gradual process in which the beats of the  $\frac{6}{8}$  pattern become transformed into a duple time under the influence of the  $\frac{2}{4}$  timing. Malabe (1990, 19), instead, suggests that the *rumba* style involves the combination of hearing the  $\frac{6}{8}$  rhythm in the claves while the main body of the rhythm is in  $\frac{2}{4}$ , but with a leaning towards  $\frac{6}{8}$ . If the former is the case one would expect to find rhythmic patterns in which the clave beats lie between  $\frac{6}{8}$  and  $\frac{2}{4}$ , whereas if the latter is an accurate description the clave in *rumba* would be measurable as a  $\frac{6}{8}$  rhythm.

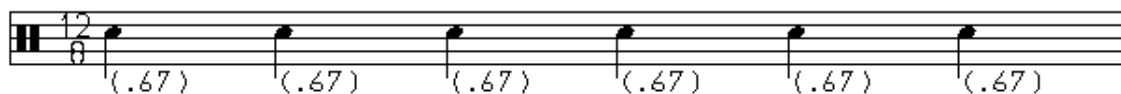
Cuban *rumba* is divided into three distinct forms: *yambú*, *guaguanco* and *columbia*. Traditionally none of these are notated but are passed on aurally from musician to musician. Their basic rhythmic differences consist in that the *yambú* is considered a  $\frac{4}{4}$  rhythm, the *guaguanco* a  $\frac{4}{4}$  with  $\frac{6}{8}$  overtones and the *columbia* a  $\frac{6}{8}$ .

By recording clave patterns and using a wave file editing program which displays the visual representation of a sound's wave pattern, one can plot the note events in the visual representation of the sound as a function of time. Accurately measuring the exact occurrence of each note and manually placing the notes on a staff according to this occurrence in time enables one to analyse and compare clave patterns spatially (see Fig. 7-26). Clearly the note values need to be adjusted so that the clave patterns are measured over the same period. This shows that in *columbia* the placing of the clave rhythm beats is between  $\frac{6}{8}$  and  $\frac{4}{4}$  and in *guaguanco* and *yambú* the placing is very close to, though not aligned exactly with,  $\frac{4}{4}$ . This would appear to support the model proposed by Mauleón (see above).

Standard 12/8 bar divided into four even beats.



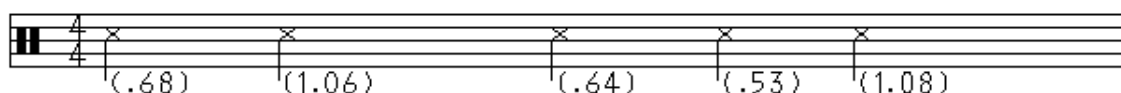
Standard 12/8 bar divided into 6 even beats.



Cuban 6/8 rhythm: two bars of clave pattern written as one 12/8 bar.



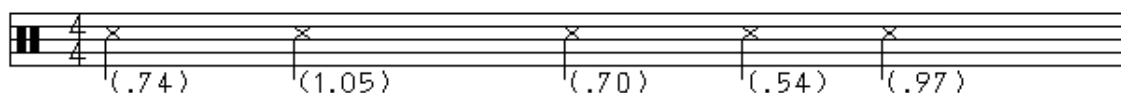
Cuban rumba columbia clave pattern



Cuban rumba guaguanco clave pattern.



Cuban rumba yambu clave pattern.



Theoretical Cuban rumba clave pattern.



Standard 4/4 bar divided into four even beats.

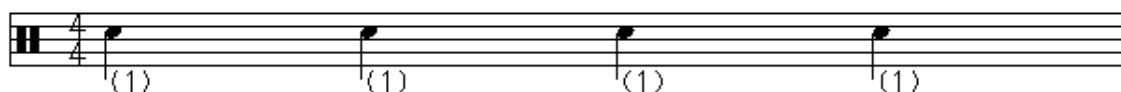


Fig. 7-26 Diagram showing how the different types of rumba rhythm form a link between the afro seis por ocho in triple time and the contemporary 4/4 rumba. Numbers in brackets represent decimal fractions of the time value of a crotchet beat.

Fig. 7-26 shows the spatial representation of note values in different variants on the *rumba* rhythm. It begins showing a  $\frac{12}{8}$  bar divided first into four even beats ( $4 \times \text{half note}$ ) and then six even beats ( $6 \times \text{quarter note}$ ). The four  $\text{half notes}$  are equivalent to the four  $\text{quarter notes}$  beats of the  $\frac{4}{4}$  bar of the last line. The numbers shown in brackets beneath the notes on all the staves represent the value of those notes in decimal fractions of the four beats of the  $\frac{4}{4}$  bar. The third line shows the Cuban *afro seis por ocho* in the configuration which corresponds to the *rumba* clave in a theoretical metronomic representation, showing its note values relative to the standard  $\frac{4}{4}$  bar. The fourth line shows the spatial note placement and note values from an actual recording of *rumba columbia* which, it will be recalled, is considered by Cubans to be a  $\frac{6}{8}$  rhythm. The fifth line takes note values from a live recording of a *rumba guaguanco* which is considered to be a  $\frac{4}{4}$  rhythm with  $\frac{6}{8}$  overtones. The sixth line represents a recording of a *rumba yambú*, a  $\frac{4}{4}$  rhythm. The spatial representation of the

notes of these three *rumba* rhythms show a gradual alteration in alignment from  $\frac{12}{8}$  to  $\frac{4}{4}$  as one moves from *columbia* to *guaguancó* to *yambú*. This suggests two things:

- (1) that the *rumba* has gradually evolved from a  $\frac{6}{8}$  to a  $\frac{4}{4}$  rhythm<sup>2</sup>;
- (2) that the bell or clave patterns are sufficiently flexible to be able to adjust to different rhythmic meters.

What has been shown in this section is that it is arguable that the African bell patterns have not only survived in Cuban *santería* music, but also in different forms of secular popular music. In the secular music they persisted either as clave patterns, as in the different varieties of *rumba*, or as rhythmic patterns in the melody, as in the case of the saraband and the habanera. In addition it has been shown that these patterns are capable of being transformed rhythmically while maintaining their distinctive character.<sup>3</sup>

The relevance to *bambuco* of these ideas is that the Black Africans who came to Cuba, such as the *Lucumí*, *Arará* and *Carabalí* (Vuyesteke n.d.: 15), came from the same tribes as those who came to the Pacific Coast of Colombia (Bermúdez 1987a, 114), which is a source area of influence for *bambuco*. It is therefore reasonable to expect that clave patterns similar to those found in Cuban music will be found in some styles of Colombian music, either as a clear rhythmic presence or hidden within the melodic structures.

In fact if one considers the archetypal *bambuco* melodic rhythmic structure:



Fig. 7-27 Archetypal 2-bar phrase for bambucos (See chapter 4).

It is clear that it coincides with one of the rhythmic configurations of the 12-beat ( $n=1$ ) version of Arom's (1991, 248) general rhythmic pattern:

<sup>2</sup> This becomes more interesting when one considers that the *rumba* clave itself exists as an African bell pattern (See later in this chapter).

<sup>3</sup> A third important point raised by the rhythmic comparisons made between the types of *rumba* is that of the notation of rhythms in the context of folkloric styles. The use of standard Western classical notation is inadequate because it implies the use of metric note values and therefore it gives an inaccurate picture of the real values. The rhythms are perfectly regular and integrate with the other instruments in the ensemble but the note values create irregular divisions within the system of beats which do not correspond to the usual crotchets and quavers, and yet these are generally the means used to notate these rhythms. Seeing that most music is based on rhythms which originated from folk music the idea that any music should be played metronomically is an over-simplification of its musical context and therefore a cheapening of musical values in general.



Fig. 7-28 A 12-beat ( $n=1$ ) version of Arom's (1991, 248) general rhythmic pattern.

And with Jones' African signature tune:



Fig. 7-29 The African bell - pattern described by A. M. Jones (1971, 3) as the African 'Signature-tune.'

### The perception in Colombia of the possible existence of a relationship between African music and the *bambuco*

The sources for this section rely almost exclusively on those provided by Harry Davidson (1971) as he gives the most complete and reliable selection available of relevant historical sources, however, while his arguments are discussed, very little use is made of them as the conclusions drawn by the author of this thesis are generally opposed to those of Davidson.

#### **Opinions in favour of the idea of African origins**

1) The first specific association between the *bambuco* and African musical and cultural sources occurred in a novel, previously mentioned in this thesis, *María* by Jorge Isaacs, published in 1867 in Bogotá. Until this time there does not have appear to have been any reference at all to the *bambuco*'s origins. The exact reference occurs on page 181:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Siendo el 'bambuco' una música que en nada se asemeja a la de los aborígenes americanos, ni a los aires españoles, no hay ligereza en asegurar que fue traída de Africa por los primeros esclavos que los conquistadores importaron al Cauca, tanto más que el nombre que hoy tiene parece no ser otro que el de 'Bambuk', levemente alterado | Being the <i>bambuco</i> a music that in no way resembles that of the American aborigines, nor to Spanish airs, there is no frivolity in assuring that it was brought from Africa by the first slaves that the conquerors brought to the Cauca region, so much so that the name that today it carries seems to be none other than that of 'Bambuk', slightly altered |
| (Cited in Davidson 1970a, 181-2).   |  |

It will be recalled from chapter 4 that Bambuk or Bambouk was a tribal nation of French Sudan and is now a region of western Mali close to the border with Senegal. The term means: 'Land of back-carriers,' in the Mande language being derived from the words *bāmbu*: 'back-carrier' and *ko*: 'country' (Room 1994, 25). This suggests that the inhabitants of this region carried

things on their backs rather than follow the more usual African custom of carrying things on the head.

The suggestion by Isaacs led to declarations by many other Colombian authors in support of this idea. Some upheld it with further evidence while others merely repeated it.

2) José María Vergara y Vergara writing in 1876 in his Historia de la literatura en Nueva Granada reiterated Isaacs' opinion adding:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>entre nosotros no existe como popular una sola danza española: lo que baila nuestro pueblo es <i>bambuco</i> y bundes de origen africano<br/>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 182).</p> | <p>Among our people not a single Spanish dance enjoys any popularity: <i>Bambucos</i> and <i>bundes</i> of African origin are what our people dance.</p> |
|---|--|

Vergara y Vergara refers to Isaacs as a poet and does not refer to the novel *María* so it would appear that his agreement with Isaacs' opinion was not merely based on having read of it in the novel.

3) Rufino José Cuervo in his Apuntaciones críticas merely cites Isaacs' novel and so does not add any strength to the argument. He states:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>el autor de <i>María</i> supuso que a Bambuk región africana, debe su nombre el <i>bambuco</i>, nuestro aire y baile popular por excelencia.<br/>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 182)</p> | <p><i>María's</i> author supposed that the <i>bambuco</i>, our air and popular dance par excellence, owes its name to the African region of Bambuk.</p> |
|--|---|

4) A Doctor Saffray notes in page 91 of his *Viaje a la Nueva Granada* (published in Vol. XXIV of *Le Tour du Monde* in Paris, 1869) that in Cartagena:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>No se conoce más que un baile que es el <i>bambuco</i>. Mezcla de tradiciones coreográficas del indio chibcha y del negro congo.<br/>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 182)</p> | <p>Only one dance is known which is the <i>bambuco</i>. A mixture of choreographic traditions of Chibcha Indians and of Congolese Africans.</p> |
|--|---|

It is not clear if Saffray recognised this cultural combination in the *bambuco*, if he presumed it, or if it was common hearsay of the period. Although it places him in agreement with Isaacs on the question of African origin, he differs in that he associates it with the Congo rather than Mali.

5) Juan C. Osorio wrote in his *Breves apuntes para la historia de la música en Colombia* (Vol. III of *Repertorio Colombiano*, no. 15, Bogotá, September 1879), page 164, that:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>El <i>bambuco</i> fue importado al Cauca por los esclavos africanos oriundos de Bambuk.<br/>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 182)</p> | <p>The <i>bambuco</i> was imported to the Cauca region by African slaves originally from Bambuk.</p> |
|---|--|

Osorio appears only to be repeating Isaacs' opinion and so, like Cuervo, adds no weight to the argument.

6) Luciano Rivera Garrido wrote in *Algo sobre el Valle del Cauca* (Something about Valle del Cauca) (Buga 1886, 25):

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>En cuanto a danzas, el pueblo caucano no ha inventado nada que merezca la pena de mencionarse, porque el <i>bambuco</i> no le pertenece.<br/>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 182)</p> | <p>As for dances, the people of Cauca have not invented anything that is worth mentioning, because the <i>bambuco</i> doesn't belong to them.</p> |
|--|---|

This apparently presumes that the *bambuco* came from Africa, as Davidson (1970a, 182) states that Rivera Garrido accepted Vergara's hypothesis which was taken from Isaacs and, like Cuervo and Osorio does not provide new evidence to reinforce this point of view.

7) The next statement in favour of the African origin of the *bambuco* came "some years later" (Davidson 1970a, 182) in another novel by Tomás Carrasquilla titled La marquesa de Yolombó. The novel is placed in the middle of the eighteenth century and on page 24 states:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Doña Bárbara guardando la distancia con mucha discreción se divierte con los negros bozales y les busca palique... En cuanto a los cantores y guachistas, los llama a cada atardecer; los escucha con franco deleite y hasta les acompaña esos aires tristes, hondos y aflorantes, de los cuales se ha derivado el <i>bambuco</i>.<br/>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 183)</p> | <p>Doña<sup>4</sup> Barbara while keeping her distance with a lot of discretion has a good time with the black <i>bozales</i><sup>5</sup> and seeks conversation among them. As for the singers and percussionists, she calls them each evening; she listens to them with frank delight and even accompanies them in those sad, deep and florid airs, from which the <i>bambuco</i> has been derived.</p> |
|--|---|

Like Isaacs' comments this is an interesting observation which probably relates to life in the plantations in the Cauca valley.

8) In an article in *El Nuevo Tiempo* published in Bogotá on the 11th of January 1906, titled 'La música nacional' Guillermo Uribe Holguín, writing about the *bambuco* states:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Bien probable que tanto el nombre como la música y aun la misma danza, fueran traídos de Africa, tanto más que nuestro bambuco es proveniente del</p> | <p>It is very probable that the name just as the music and even the dance itself were brought from Africa, so much more so since our <i>bambuco</i> comes from the Cauca</p> |
|--|--|

<sup>4</sup> A fairly arbitrary and artificial term of respect for people (Don for men) who hold some place of respect in society.

<sup>5</sup> *Bozales*: a term used to apply to black slaves who had been recently brought from Africa, to distinguish them from those who had been born on the plantations. The expression also means "muzzle" or "bit" and may have some meaning relating to how the Black Africans were bound when brought from Africa

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Cauca, donde la raza negra es abundante<br>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 183). | region, where the black race is abundant. |
|--|---|

Like the other authors Uribe presents only a subjective opinion on the matter without any real evidence to support it.

9) Antonio José Restrepo in his *Cancionero* (page 33, no date given) also, according to Davidson (1970a, 183), supports Isaacs stating that:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| El bambuco es calentano. . . de la raza morena que nos lo trajo de Africa<br>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 183). | The <i>bambuco</i> is <i>calentano</i> . . . of the brown race that brought it to us from Africa. |
|--|---|

*Calentano* here means ‘from the hot lands’ which usually relates to the Tolima and Huila areas of Colombia which lie between the Central and Eastern Cordilleras of the Andes whereas the Cauca area, with which the origins of the *bambuco* are usually associated, lies between the Western and Central Cordilleras, so this presents yet another diverse opinion without evidence to support it.

10) Similarly Pedro M. Ibáñez Vol. 1 of his *Crónicas de Bogotá* (1913, page 241), reiterating Isaacs’ opinion wrote:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| La música del bambuco, de origen africano, traído por los esclavos del Bambuk a nuestras costas, llegó a Santafé en los tiempos de la colonización<br>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 183). | The music of the <i>bambuco</i> , of African origin, brought by the slaves of Bambuk to our coasts, arrived in Santafé [Bogotá] during the time of the colonisation |
|---|---|

11) Davidson (1970a, 183-186) then brings to our notice an author, Enrique Naranjo Martínez, who had dedicated himself to the study of the origins of the *bambuco* since 1930 and published his findings in diverse journals and periodicals between 1934 and 1939. Part of his



investigation was based on the description by a North American explorer who described a dance he saw in Egyptian Sudan and which he described in the following manner:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| El baile de esos negros del Sudán, que describe Mr. Merian C. Cooper, es exactamente el <i>bambuco</i> . Lo baila la mujer huyendo de su pareja; baila dentro del círculo de los espectadores, las manos en la cadera, ora avanzando, ora haciendo quites al hombre que baila con ella.<br>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 184) | The dance of the black Africans of Sudan that Mr Merian C. Cooper describes is exactly the same as the <i>bambuco</i> . The woman dances fleeing from her partner; she dances inside a circle formed by the spectators, her hands on her hips, now advancing, then rejecting the man who dances with her. |
|---|---|

Apparently Cooper later modified his opinion classifying the described dance as a “precursor” of the *bambuco*, and considering it possible that there was another dance from West Africa that became mixed with the dance he had described and which took the name of *bambuco*, meaning the dance of the people of Bambuk. He did not exclude the possibility that the *bambuco* might then have taken on influences from Amerindian and Spanish music. Naranjo cites illustrations in Cooper’s work which showed Africans from Egyptian Sudan of very similar appearance to those who live in the Valle del Cauca region, adding that the sword fighting techniques of the Black Africans of the Valle del Cauca region are notably similar to those of the African inhabitants of the regions close to the Red Sea. Therefore Naranjo concludes that the *bambuco* had its origins among the Black Africans who came from Egyptian Sudan and therefore from the opposite side of Africa to that suggested by Isaacs. It will be recalled that in Ethiopia which lies close to the area described by Cooper, and also Naranjo, there is a locality called *Bambuco* (see chapter 3) so perhaps his opinion, though too weakly documented to consider as a strong hypothesis, could be possible.

12) Davidson (1970a, 187) cites an anonymous article titled ‘Asteriscos’ which appeared in the periodical *Diario del Pacífico* (year XII, no. 2200, published in Cali on the 21st of December 1938). The article, relating the *bambuco* to the Mandingo tribe (native to the African countries of Senegal, The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau), stated that

|   |  |
|---|--|
| El <i>bambuco</i> es originario del Senegal (porque) un caballero caleño nos asegura que las esclavas de su bisabuela, oriundas de Senegal, bailaban el <i>bambuco</i> como su baile nativo. Y esto ya constituye plena prueba en favor de nuestra tesis.<br>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 187) | The <i>bambuco</i> is originally from Senegal (because) a gentleman from Cali assures us that his great-grandmother’s slaves, originally from Senegal, danced the <i>bambuco</i> as a their native dance. And this already constitutes a full proof in favour of our thesis. |
|---|--|

This point is of particular importance because the then nation of Bambouk, Isaacs’ supposed source for the *bambuco*, was also inhabited by members of the Mandingo tribe (Lippincott 1880, 166). In addition, Bambouk was a possession in the fifteenth century of the Portuguese who

were the principal providers of slaves to the New World (Lippincott 1880, 166). Consequently a feasible link exists which strengthens Isaacs' view.

13) The next opinion on the question does not appear until 1952, when Antonio María Peñaloza states that, "having dedicated 11 years to the study of the *bambuco*," he is in a position to affirm that "the rhythm of the *bambuco* is originally African" (cited in Davidson 1970a, 187) and that:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Los ritmos de currulao, fandango, merengue, puya y otros ritmos de las costas del Pacífico y el Atlántico de igual número de corcheas por compás, son, potencialmente, <i>bambucos</i> menos cultos (desde el punto de vista melódico armónico europeo) que el <i>bambuco</i> que se desarrolló en Bogotá y algunos centros importantes del interior del país</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(cited in Davidson 1970a, 187)</p> | <p>The rhythms of <i>currulao</i>, <i>fandango</i>, <i>merengue</i>, <i>puya</i> and other rhythms of the Pacific and the Atlantic coasts of the same number of quavers per compass (six), are, potentially, <i>bambucos</i> which are less developed (from the point of view of European melody and harmony) than the <i>bambuco</i> that evolved in Bogotá and other important centres of the interior of the country.</p> |
|---|--|

According to Davidson (1970a, 187-8), Peñaloza's opinions were published in various editions of the Colombian national periodical *El Espectador*, notably in numbers 13,359 (3rd March 1952), 13,368 (14th March 1952) and 14,490 (11 December 1955) in which Peñaloza further declared his opinion that the *bambuco* was brought to Colombia by the Bantu culture and entered through the Pacific Coast where it combined with the Amerindian culture. The Bantu, originally based in Central Africa, split into two major linguistic branches early in their history: the Eastern and Western Bantu. The Eastern Bantu migrated through present-day Zimbabwe and Mozambique, down to South Africa. The Western Bantu moved into what is now Angola, Namibia, and northwestern Botswana (Bantu 1996). Davidson does not specifically include the Bantu among tribes who were imported to Colombia, though many may have been included among those brought from Angola. The opinion of Peñaloza is of great importance because he was himself a musician and composer who studied the form of notating the *bambuco*, among other rhythms, and who carried out investigations concerning Colombian folk music in "every corner of our country which he personally visited" (Salazar 1987, 94). He supported the principle that the *bambuco* should be notated in **♩** (Salazar 1987, 94). Though Peñaloza's musical opinion is to be respected, some doubt may perhaps be cast on his ethnological investigation as the relationship he proposes between the *bambuco* and the Bantu, though not to be necessarily dismissed, is supported by no other author.

It can be observed that the arguments in favour of an African link to the *bambuco* suffer from a lack of evidence and objective documentation, which make them relatively easy to rebuff or discount.

Later contributions to the debate include studies concerning the music of Colombia's Pacific Coast carried out separately by Pardo Tovar (1964) and Uribe Bueno (included in Restrepo 1987), which were considered in chapter four in discussion concerning the notation of the *bambuco*. The music of this region is generally acknowledged as subject to significant Black African influence, and association of the *bambuco* with this culture implies that it also was a product of this African influence. However no direct connection between any specific African source and the *bambuco* is made

Perhaps the most supportable link between the *bambuco* and Africa was the original one made by Isaacs. The regions around the once existent nation of Bambouk have a tradition of *griot* or *jali* (Joob n.d.) or *jalou* (Stone 1998) singers and music, where *jali* or *jalou* is the Mandinka term, and *griot* the French equivalent. Joob (n.d.) notes how these musicians form a separate caste of bards in Manding society, which linguistically is composed of Maninka, spoken in Western Mali and Eastern Guinea, Bambara spoken in Central Mali and partially in Eastern Mauritania, and Mandinka in Southern Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. Although they may be used interchangeably, each of these languages defines a musical style with different lyrics and preferences for certain instruments. Maninka is the most classical linguistic/music style whose traditional instrument is the *ngoni* lute along with the *doundoun* drums (Joob n.d.). The *ngoni* (in Bambara or *hoddu* in Fulani, related to, or also known as: *koting*, *khalam*, *kurang*, *diassare*, *bappe*, *ndere*, *kuntigi*, *nkoni*, *tidinit*, [Sadie 1984]) is a 1- to 5-stringed lute which is believed by Joob (n.d.) to have originated in what he describes as 'ancient Egypt' and which can be dated in Mali to 1353, when, as the *nkoni*, it was described by an Arab traveller, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa ('Koting' 1984, 459).



Fig. 7-30 Griot or Jali musician with lute (Joob n.d.)

Other instruments used by the Jali musicians are the *kora*, a 25- to 32-stringed harp, by far the most popular instrument today, and a marimba, called *balafon* in Maninka, which usually has 18 to 21 keys cut from rosewood suspended on a bamboo frame.

Joob (n.d.) suggests that the *ngoni* reappeared in the West Indies as the banjo. Linguistically the banjo, which was first cited as the *banza* in Martinique in 1678 (Desalles 1847:III, 297, cited in Epstein 1975, 359) has been identified with the Kimbundu *mbanza* (Dalby, cited in Epstein

1975, 371). The Kimbundu are one of the principal tribes of Angola, an ex-Portuguese colony and so source of many slaves taken to the Americas. The banjo conserves the g"-b"-d" tuning on its upper three strings which is shared by descendants of the Portuguese *cavaquinho*, such as the Hawaiian 'ukulele, the Brazilian *cavaquinho* and the Colombo-Venezuelan *cuatro* and is found only on these instruments. For this reason it is more possible that the banjo descended from the *mbanza*, which itself may have been influenced by or have developed from the *cavaquinho*. These instruments also all share the playing technique of strumming broadly and quickly across all the strings at once as well as the use of tremolo strum techniques.



Fig. 7-31 Colombian marimba from the Pacific Coast which uses the same suspension system as the Maninka balafon.

The fact that wooden marimbas are the traditional melody instruments characteristic of Colombia's Pacific Coast, and that 'Bámbara Negra' (referring to the language and tribe of Mali) is found as a dance song in that region strongly suggest that some cultural link exists between Mali and the Pacific Coast. The *jali* or *griot* tradition in which a vocalist accompanies himself on

a lute seems to relate easily to the *bambuco* tradition in which a vocal soloist accompanies himself on a *tiple* or guitar.

Davidson (1970a, 288-292) describes the demise of wind and percussion bands as the preferred ensemble for playing *bambucos*, and how this rôle was gradually accorded to the string ensembles. It would appear that in the post-colonial period towards the middle of the nineteenth century, as society became more urbanised, it came to require a more elegant entertainment. The first reference to this tendency appeared in the periodical *La Gaceta Mercantil* (16:1848) published in Santa Marta:

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|---|--|
| <p>In Bogotá, solamente la música no correspondía a la sociedad, que era selecta, y con buena sociedad no está bien el ruido de la tambora en un salón. La tambora solo está bien en la música militar. . . En los salones no se usa este instrumento. . . espero que tal instrumento irá cayendo en desuso en los bailes</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(cited in Davidson 1970a, 288).</p> | <p>In Bogotá, only the music did not correspond to the society which was exclusive, and in fine society the noise of the <i>tambora</i> in a living room is not suitable. The <i>tambora</i> is only suitable for military music. . . In the living rooms this instrument is not appropriate. . . I hope such an instrument will fall into disuse for dances</p> |
|---|--|

This was, according to Davidson (1970a, 288-292), symptomatic of a campaign carried out during the last half of the nineteenth century to replace the wind bands with string ensembles. However he does not point to a period when the string ensembles began to appear. Rather it would seem that the string ensembles had always been an alternative to the wind bands which began to be used less commonly, and that from the very time of its emergence the *bambuco* had been played on string instruments. The earliest known painting of a *bambuco* being danced shows string instruments (Puerta 1987, 22). If the original performers of *bambucos* were Mandinkas from Bambouk they would have played them on string instruments and/or marimbas and both of these traditions have continued in the source areas of the *bambuco*. However the string instruments, which would have been more acceptable to *criollo* society, moved inland. The *bambuco* played on string instruments took on the influences which adapted it into the modern *bambuco* while the marimbas remained on the Pacific Coast playing what came to be called *bambucos viejos* (old *bambucos*).

### Opinions against the idea of African origins

1) Davidson (1970a, 188) begins the rebuttal case by citing Enrique Otero D'Costa, describing him as "one of the most erudite, agreeable and conscientious historians that have honoured Colombia." In March 1927 Otero began his opposition to the thesis of the African *bambuco* in his 'Apuntes sobre demografía colombianos, II - Cantares', in the periodical *Santafé de Bogotá* (9/51, 102) writing that "the *bambuco* is not an African air but very Colombian" (cited in

Davidson 1970a, 188). What implies that Otero has taken a basically racist stance is the fact that he perceives that if something is African it couldn't be Colombian, implying that Africa has not contributed to Colombian culture.

In a later publication Montañas de Santander (Mountains of Santander) (p.170) he expresses his opinion against that “already accepted. . . axiom that [the *bambuco*] is African” (cited in Davidson 1970a, 188), which suggested that until this time the thesis of the African *bambuco* had held significant influence.

No puede serlo por la sencilla razón de que él no es popular entre los conglomerados negros de nuestro país, y siendo esto así como lo es, sería un contrasentido admitir que esa música fuera importada a Colombia por los elementos étnicos que, precisamente, son los que menos la usan, por no decir que la desconocen; en cambio el bambuco críase silvestre en el Tolima, en Santander y en otras regiones en donde predomina el elemento mestizo y aun el indio puro, con ausencia casi absoluta del elemento africano.

It cannot be for the simple reason that it is not popular among the black communities of our country, and being this as it is, it would be an absurdity to admit that that music was imported into Colombia by the ethnic elements that, in fact, least use it, without suggesting that they ignore it; on the other hand the bambuco is endemic in Tolima, in Santander and in other regions where the mestizo element predominates and even the pure Indian, with almost absolute absence of the African element.

The suggestion that the Afro-Colombians do not and have never made use of the *bambuco* is later refuted by Davidson (1970a, 288-) who associates the *bambuco* with Afro-Colombians, but then suggests that they learnt it from the Spanish.

The fact that at Otero's time of writing the performance of the *bambuco* as music or dance was primarily the prerogative of the *criollo* and *mestizo* community can be easily explained by the fact that the Afro-Colombians had already left the *bambuco* behind and had gone on to newer forms like the *currulao*, the *porro* and the Afro-Cuban *sones* that were beginning to spread around the world as the 'rumba.'

Otero continues:

La música popular negra de nuestras costas, como la cumbia, el currulao, bunde, etc., distínguese generalmente por sus alaridos, por su tono selvático, sus arranques de enfurecido dolor. En cambio, el *bambuco* es todo dulcemente, de suave y cadencioso, reflejo de un espíritu

The popular black music of our coasts, like the *cúmbia*, the *currulao*, the *bunde*, etc., can generally be distinguished for its cries, for its savage tone, its outbursts of infuriated pain. On the other hand, the *bambuco* is completely sweet, soft and rhythmic, the reflection of the meek and humble, resigned, docile



|   |  |
|---|--|
| manso y humilde, resignado, dócil<br>cual es el pueblo que descende<br>del indio o lleva su sangre.<br>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 188) | spirit of the people who descend<br>from the Amerindian or who carries<br>his blood. |
|---|--|

Otero appears to assume that all music of Black African origin is of “a savage tone” ignores the immense range a variety of African musical genres and styles of interpretation. Furthermore it is a commonly observable occurrence that when percussion based rhythm of African origin of an extroverted character becomes accepted by and adopted by urban Western society it becomes transformed. It usually develops in melody and harmony at the cost of some of its rhythmic characteristics. It is almost incomprehensible that the Saraband evolved from a form whose performance was so extroverted that it was punishable by exile or a beating into the refined elegance of the suite movement of the Baroque era. Even the *bunde*, included by Otero as late as 1927 among what he describes as “music of savage tone” (see above), became the regional anthem of Tolima in the form of a most delicate and harmonious piece: the ‘Bunde Tolimense.’ Therefore the idea that the “sweet, soft and rhythmic” *bambuco* could have evolved from more percussive and extroverted African genres is quite feasible. Otero then attempts to associate the same “sweet, soft and rhythmic” *bambuco* with a presumably “weak and humble, resigned, docile spirit of the Amerindian.” He forgets or ignores examples to the contrary characterised by the thirteen year war (from 1605 to 1618) waged by the Spanish colonial government against the Pijao tribe in the Tolima area (Davis 1993, 9 & 396). His arguments are poor and emotionally based in a similar way to those which attempted to prove that the banjo had been invented by white settlers in the U.S.A. (Epstein 1975, 359).

2) Another enemy of the hypothesis of the African origin of the *bambuco* cited by Davidson (1970a, 189) is the noted musician Daniel Zamudio who wrote in Folklore musical de Colombia (p. 21):

|   |   |
|---|---|
| El ritmo, casi único elemento de la<br>música de los negros venidos a<br>América, era cosa elemental y<br>primitiva en ella. Más tarde, gracias<br>a la entonces incipiente síncopa, se<br>desarrolló y tomó cuerpo<br>principalmente en Cuba ( <i>rumba</i> ,<br>conga, etc.) y en Estados Unidos<br>(two-step, fox trot, schimmy) y sus<br>derivados. La feliz acogida que ha<br>tenido en cabarets y salones | Almost the only element of the<br>African music to come to America<br>was the rhythm, which was<br>elementary and primitive in itself.<br>Later, thanks to syncopation which<br>was beginning to gain popularity, it<br>developed and took form mainly in<br>Cuba ( <i>rumba</i> , conga, etc.) and in the<br>United States (two-step, fox trot,<br>shimmy) and their derivatives. The<br>good reception that it has had in |
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| sociales se debe a la potencia<br>dinámica de la síncopa.<br>(Cited in Davidson 1970a, 189) | cabarets and social dances is due to<br>the dynamic power of the<br>syncopation |
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Davidson (1970a, 189) comments that Zamudio's affirmation is true and asks "What do these [African] rhythms have to do with that of the *bambuco*?" thus making the absurd suggestion that rather than African rhythms being syncopated rhythms themselves, they acquired syncopation and thereby became popular. Thus Davidson tacitly agrees with the then widely held (in Colombia, at least) misbelief that African rhythms existed only in a simple duple form. Zamudio goes on to express disbelief that the Africans could have brought also the major and minor scales which make up the melodic structure of the *bambuco* taking the view that if the Black Africans did not bring all of the *bambuco* then they did not bring any of it.

3) Another author opposed to the theory of African origins of the *bambuco* is Lubín E. Mazuera writing in *Orígenes históricos del bambuco y músicos vallecaucanos* (1972). Mazuera also assumes that Black African rhythms, taking those of the Atlantic Coast as his example, were only in simple duple time. He concludes that America received nothing of significance from the African continent (Mazuera 1972, 21).

The authors who make the assumption that rhythms practised by Afro-Colombians are exclusively in simple duple time ignore the *currulao*, the *aguabajo*, the *puya*, the *bullerengue*, the *merengue vallenato* among the well known rhythms and many more among the less known, and also ignore the fact that these rhythms have their roots in traditional African music in which compound triple rhythms predominated. Study of Afro-Cuban *santería* rhythms (Cornelius, 1991) shows that by far the majority of these are in triple time. In the Latin American musical environment there has been a gradual transition from triple to duple metres which has been researched by Rolando Pérez Fernández (1986). The simple duple *cúmbia* was originally mentioned as a *cumbee* in  $\frac{3}{4}$  rhythm in Mexico (Stevenson 1976, 236) and in contemporary times, the *merengue* from the Dominican Republic has evolved from a  $\frac{3}{4}$  to a  $\frac{2}{4}$  rhythm. In the section on claves earlier in this chapter, it was shown how the Cuban  $\frac{4}{4}$  *rumba* has developed from a  $\frac{6}{8}$  rhythm. Accordingly the notion that Black Africans did not bring triple rhythms to the New World is a very poor argument based on ignorance at best and prejudice at worst.

4) In an article published in the periodical *Espectador Dominical* (6 November 1960, 2) titled 'Tertulia sobre el *bambuco*' (Discussion Concerning the *Bambuco*) José Ignacio Perdomo Escobar, author of *Historia de la Música en Colombia*, mentions that:

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|--|--|
| de que nuestro <i>bambuco</i> no tiene<br>origen negro... Yo hallo su origen<br>más antiguo en la revolución de los<br>Comuneros. Parece que la primera<br>cantadora de <i>bambuco</i> fue Manuela | our <i>bambuco</i> doesn't have black<br>origin... I find its oldest source in<br>the revolution of the <i>Comuneros</i> . It<br>seems that the first singer of<br><i>bambucos</i> was Manuela Beltrán |
|--|--|



Beltrán, que era bundelera. | who was a *bundelera* <sup>6</sup>.

Like many of the authors, both for and against the Afro-*bambuco* thesis, Perdomo offers no evidence and even includes a contradiction. According to Otero, writing long after the period of the revolution of the *Comuneros*,<sup>7</sup> the *bunde* was still considered Black African music, whereas Perdomo describes *bundes*, as sung by Manuela Beltrán, as not being related to “black origin.”

5) In the same discussion (see above), Jorge Lalinde declared his opinion that the African origin that had been attributed to the *bambuco* should be discarded. He offers no reason or justification for this opinion.

### Popularity of the *bambuco* among Afro-Colombians

Davidson (1970a, 192) refutes the idea that the *bambuco* had never been popular among Afro-Colombians:

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| <p>. . . no es cierto, como dicen algunos de los autores que se oponen a la hipótesis del origen africano del <i>bambuco</i>, que éste ‘no es popular entre los conglomerados negros de nuestro país’. No lo será en la actualidad, pero es evidente que en el siglo XIX bailaban <i>bambuco</i> desde los negros de Cartagena hasta los de El Bordo en Nariño, y desde los de Maiquetía en Venezuela hasta los de Barbacoas en el Pacífico, o sea que se danzaba a todo lo largo y a todo lo ancho del territorio patrio.</p> | <p>. . . the idea proposed by some of the authors who are opposed to the hypothesis of the African origin of the <i>bambuco</i> that it ‘is not popular among the Black African community of our country’ is not true. It may not be at the present time, but it is evident that in the nineteenth century the <i>bambuco</i> was danced from the Black Africans of Cartagena to those of El Bordo in Nariño, and from those of Maiquetía in Venezuela to those of Barbacoas on the Pacific Coast, which is to say that was danced through the whole length and breadth of our territory.</p> |
|--|---|

The first evidence which specifically associates the *bambuco* with Black Africans refers to the town of Maiquetía in Venezuela, written by Richard Baché under the pseudonym of ‘An official of the U. S. Army,’ who described a dance recognised by Davidson (1970a, 193) as a *bambuco* which was performed to the accompaniment of a harp. Isaac F. Holton in his book *Nueva Granada: Veinte meses en los Andes* (1857, 53 - cited in Davidson 1970a, 193) describes how in

<sup>6</sup> Singer of *bundes*.

<sup>7</sup> The first insurrectional movement that opened the way to later rebellions in America was that of the *Comuneros*. On 16 March 1781, a multitude gathered in El Socorro square, in Santander, to protest against the new taxes decreed by the colonial authorities. With Juan Francisco Berbeo at the head of the insurrection and the criollos Salvador Plata, Antonio Monsalve and Francisco Rosillo, 20,000 men decided to march on Santa Fé de Bogotá. However, a negotiating commission stopped the movement in Zipaquirá where “The Capitulations of Zipaquirá” were signed, by means of which *Comuneros* obtained the suppression and reduction of taxes, freedom of cultivation, free trade of tobacco, improvement of roads and bridges, access of the Americans (people born in America, or more precisely, Colombia) to the high administrative positions and the devolution of *resguardos* and salt mines to the natives, among others. However the Spanish authorities annulled the capitulations and executed the *Comuneros* (Translated from now extinct Colombian Internet site at [www.latinonet.com](http://www.latinonet.com)).

the years 1852-54 Afro-Colombians danced the *bambuco* to the accompaniment of a *tamborín* (small drum) and voices. Manuel Pombo describes a *bambuco* as it was danced in Purificación in about 1852 in *Obras inéditas* (1914, 187 - cited in Davidson 1970a, 193). The dancers, described by Pombo as a *negro* (Black African or descendant of Black Africans) and a *mulata* (descendant of White Caucasian and Black African), were accompanied in this case by a *pandereta* (tambourine) and an *alfandoque* (wooden shaker). Ricardo Carrasquilla, in a publication titled *Fiestas en Bogotá. Cuadros de costumbres* (1858, 16 - cited in Davidson 1970a, 194) observes that Afro-Colombians from the Cauca region were responsible for the dissemination of the *bambuco* throughout Colombia, including Bogotá.

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| En un corro numeroso          | In a numerous gathering                        |
| Hai unos negros caucanos      | There some blacks from Cauca                   |
| Que al son de sabrosos tiples | Who, to the wonderful sound of <i>tiples</i> , |
| El bambuco están cantando     | Are singing the <i>bambuco</i>                 |
| Con las coplas que improvisan | With improvised refrains.                      |

Dr. Carlos Saffray in his article 'Viaje a la Nueva Granada' in *Le Tour du Monde* Vol. 24 (1869, 91 - cited in Davidson 1973a, 194) describes the performance of a *bambuco* in a neighbourhood in Cartagena inhabited by *negros*, *mestizos* and Amerindians in 1862:

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| El padre cantaba acompañándole del tiple [y] la madre lo acompañaba, marcando el compás, sobre el cuero estirado que servía de puerta. Las mujeres daban palmadas a compás. Un instrumento. . . era el guache. Las voces incultas y chillonas cantaban naturalmente en tercera y en octava, las viejas marcaban el compás con energía, las guitarras hacían un acompañamiento de bajo cantante, dominado por los sonidos agudos del tiple y el guache entre las manos de un indio de pura raza, mezclaba a todo esto su ruido estridente, del cual apenas podría dar una idea un tañedor tirolés de castañuelas. | The ensemble consisted of a main vocalist, who accompanied himself on the <i>tiple</i> , while his wife marked time on "the piece of leather they used as a door." The women accompanied with hand claps, and there was a <i>guache</i> (cylindrical metal shaker) Raw high pitched voices sang in thirds and octaves, the old women marked time with energy, while guitars provided a low pitch accompaniment, which was dominated by the high pitched sound of the <i>tiple</i> and the <i>guache</i> in the hands of a pure blood Indian, which mixed all this together in a piercing noise, which vaguely gave the impression of a Tyrolean castanet player. |
|--|--|

A clear association appears to exist between Afro-Colombians, voices and percussion and string instruments. A drawing exists of a dance where an Afro-Colombian couple are dancing the *bambuco* accompanied by *guaches* (or perhaps maracas), a *tambora*, a membrane drum (perhaps a *conuno*) and various string instruments.



Fig. 7-32 Original caption: The 'bambuco bozal' or 'bambuco viejo' of the Pacific Coast.  
Drawing by Siruoy, sketch by M. André (Perdomo 1963, 336-337).

The caption of this drawing offers little information, and as credits are given to M. André for the sketch and to Siruoy for the drawing, the artwork may have been elaborated on a rough sketch provided by André. The title of '*bambuco bozal*', equated in the caption with the *bambuco viejo*, could imply that it was performed by slaves who had recently arrived from Africa, though it could also mean '*bambuco* as danced in the style of Africans who have recently arrived from Africa.' The drawing displays a remarkable similarity to the scene represented in the following description by Ed André who wrote 'La América Equinocial (Colombia-Ecuador-Perú)' in *Le Tour du Monde* Vol. 38 (1875-1876, 306).

The description of the performance on this occasion is as follows:

... una fiesta que tenía lugar en la casa de un negro barbudo, Marco Antonio, o sea, que se trata de una pura celebración negra en la cual "La orquesta... [consta de]... seis ejecutantes, sentados al fondo del local, sobre un banco de madera... el tiple o pequeña guitarra solo, abultado como la mitad de una sandía alargada y haciendo el oficio del primer violín... El maraco (sic) compuesto de dos calabazas... llenas de granos negros de la planta llamada achira... Dos guitarras (vihuela segunda) de la misma forma, pero cuatro veces más grandes, sostienen el canto con un acorde uniforme y reemplazan el segundo violín y el violoncelo. El tambor que corresponde a nuestra gran caja, yace horizontalmente sobre

... a party that took place in the house of a bearded *negro*, Marco Antonio, that is to say that is of a purely black festivity in which "The [musical] ensemble. . . [consists of]... six performers, seated at the back of the venue, on a wooden bench... the *tiple* or small solo guitar, swollen like half a lengthened watermelon and taking the rôle of the first violin. . . The *maraco* (sic) made up of two gourds. . . full of the black grains of the *achira* plant. . . Two guitars (*vihuela segunda*) of the same form, but four times bigger, they sustain the singing with a uniform chord and replace the second violin and the cello. The drum that corresponds to our *gran caja* (*tambora*), lies horizontally on the floor; and is hit strongly with a stick covered by skin.

el suelo; se le golpea fuertemente con un palo recubierto de piel. Finalmente, el cuno hace a la vez del oficio de tambor ordinario y de pandereta... se le toca con los dedos, las uñas, los puños, los codos y las rodillas.

(cited in Davidson 1970a, 197)

Finally, the *cuno* performs at the same time the rôle of ordinary drum and of tambourine. . . it is played with the fingers, the fingernails, the fists, the elbows and the knees.

There may exist some connection between the M. André of the sketch and the Ed André of the description. The *bambuco* described is performed in El Bordo, Nariño, from where the higher and medium valleys of Patía can be seen and which site was not apparently documented in Colombian maps of the time (Davidson 1970a, 197).

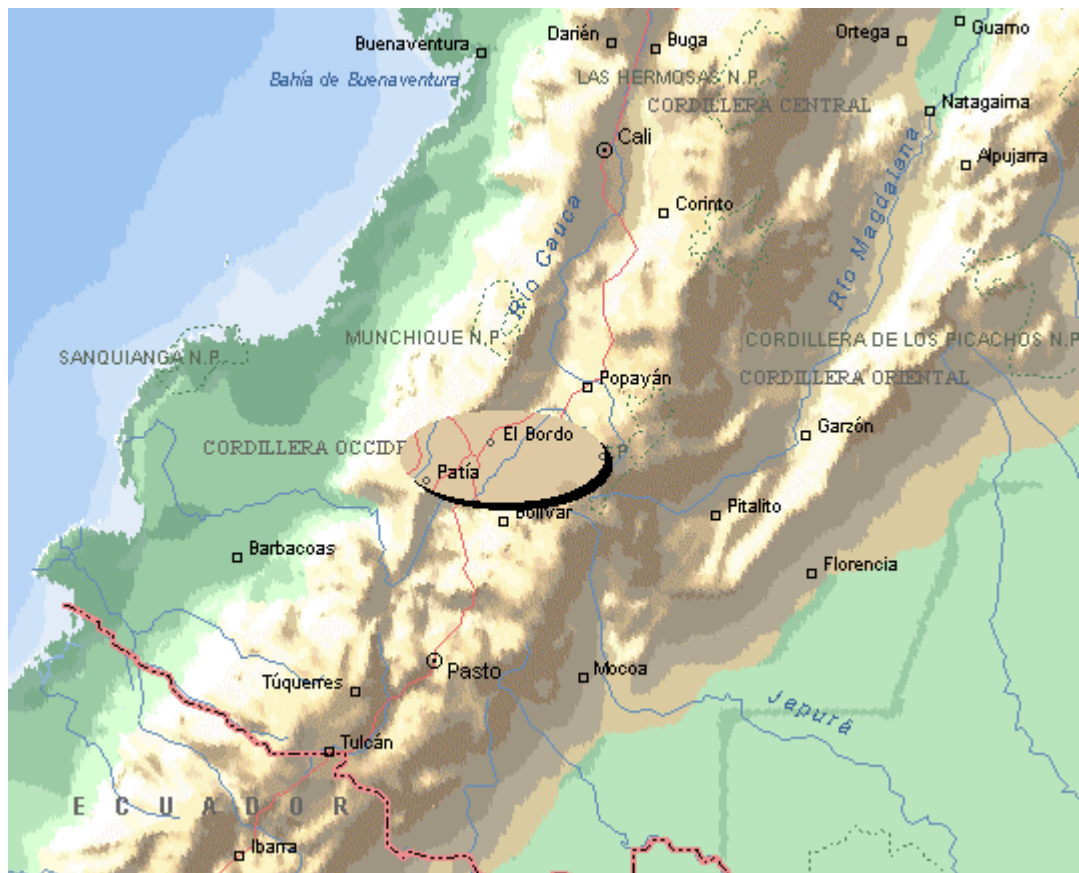


Fig. 7-33 El Bordo and the valley of Patía, Nariño (Encarta '96 World Atlas).

André also gives an interesting fact:

que de este valle del Patía “se dice que en los tiempos de los virreyes, una cuadrilla de negros traídos como esclavos de la Costa de Angola, se refugiaron en un punto llamado El Castigo... [desde donde] se les ve aun dominar en toda la región.”

(cited in Davidson 1970a, 197)

he notes that “it is said of this valley of Patía that in the times of the viceroys, a gang of Black Africans brought as slaves from the Coast of Angola took refuge in a point called El Castigo (The Punishment)... [from where] they are even now seen to dominate the whole region.”

The idea that the *bambuco* could be danced by, or have been brought by Angolan Africans is by no means far-fetched as, it will be recalled from chapter 3, in Angola there are localities called 'Bambuca' and 'Cauca.'

The first documented association between the *bambuco* and the marimba occurred in Barbacoas (See Fig. 7-33), described by Lázaro M. Girón in 'La marimba' in Papel Periódico Ilustrado, 4/21. 1885, 306 - cited in Davidson 1970a, 197), where two Afro-Colombians played a marimba to accompany a *bambuco*.

Rufino Gutiérrez, writing in 'De Tumaco a Pasto' in Repertorio Colombiano, 15/4. (1897, 332 - cited in Davidson 1970a, 198) states how in taverns and inns:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| nunca faltan la marimba y los cununos<br>cuyas notas de melancolía inexplicable,<br>son acompañadas por cantos no<br>menos tristes. . . la música importada<br>desde el fondo del Africa por la raza<br>de los esclavos, acompañada por los<br>cantos de los desheredados<br>americanos. | The marimba and the <i>cununos</i> are never<br>absent, whose notes of inexplicable<br>melancholy are accompanied by songs<br>no less sad. . . the music imported<br>from the depths of Africa by the race<br>of the slaves, accompanied by the<br>songs of disinherited Americans ( <i>criollo</i><br>Spanish). |
|--|--|

Concerning this association between Afro-Colombians and the *bambuco*, José María Vergara y Vergara who lived in Popayán towards the middle of the nineteenth century, describes in his *Historia de la literatura en la Nueva Granada* (1867, 511 - cited in Davidson 1970a, 196), how Colombian popular songs can be divided into three groups:

1. Spanish refrains which have been adopted as their own by all three racial groups
2. Spanish refrains like those of the eastern plainsmen of principally Spanish origin
3. African ballads that have been adopted by the *criollo* Spanish and even more by the *mestizos*.

It is Vergara's opinion that the Afro-Colombians received very little from their European masters and that their music developed through their own musical gifts.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| La raza negra aclimatada en su destierro<br>es eminentemente poeta, y sobre todo,<br>música y cantora sus voces son<br>maravillosas en elasticidad, expansión y<br>armonía. Un negro que toque una<br>marimba entre las selvas de las costas del<br>mar, tiene la seguridad de que las fieras y<br>las culebras le entonan escuchando<br>extáticas; el canto del trapiche, modulado<br>a media noche al son de las mazas que<br>chirrían, ha parado más de una vez el<br>azote del áspero señor<br>(cited in Davidson 1970a, 196). | The Black African adapted to his exile<br>is an eminent poet, musician and singer<br>- his voices is marvellous in elasticity,<br>range and harmony. A Black African<br>who plays a marimba among the forests<br>of the coasts, has the security that the<br>wild animals and the snakes listen to<br>him ecstatically; the song of the sugar<br>cane mill, vocalised at midnight to the<br>sound of the whirring beaters, has<br>stopped the whip of the brutal master<br>more than once. |
|--|--|

An article titled 'El *Bambuco*' signed by Aben-Haret from San Martín and which appeared in *El Telegrama* no. 2682, (1895) described a performance by a band composed of marimba, *bomba*, two *cununos* and a *guasá* (shaker):

La música había ya empezado a tocar el *bambuco*, no el adulterado y chillón que se oye en los salones, sino el verdadero, el inmortal *bambuco* ese que solo se oye en nuestras playas del Pacífico. El *bambuco* no es ni será jamás patrimonio de la raza blanca; él es y será propiedad exclusiva de la raza negra... él no se toca en el piano ni en las trompetas, [pues] para tocar ese miserere inmortal... se necesita la marimba.

(cited in Davidson 1970a, 198)

The music had already begun to play: the *bambuco*, not the adulterated and shrill one that one hears in music rooms, but the true one, the immortal *bambuco* that is only heard on our beaches of the Pacific Coast. The *bambuco* is not nor will it ever be the patrimony of the white race; it is and it will be the exclusive property of the black race... it isn't played on the piano or on the trumpets, [because] to play that immortal miserere... the marimba is needed.

The reaction of Davidson(1970a, 200) to these associations is to affirm that the Black Africans must have learned the *bambuco* from the Spanish. In support of this idea he then cites many references to African dances that are not similar to the *bambuco*. His comparisons are based on the *criollo* ballroom *bambucos* and early descriptions of Black African dances. His final conclusion (1970a, 207) is that the *bambuco* could not have African roots because:

1. The choreography of the *bambuco* is completely European.
2. The rhythms of the African tribes are in duple time, while European dances are in triple time.
3. The melody of the *bambuco* is "winged and graceful," while purely black dances are "monotonous and heavy."

In reply to these conclusions it could be said that

1. Spanish dances received so much influence during the colonial and post colonial period that while Spanish and Latin American dances are notably different, it is impossible to identify which specific traits are Spanish and which are Latin American. Davidson's acceptance of the *tirana* as the principal source for the *bambuco* is inappropriate because it is based on a sketchy description of a dance which no source has been able to cite in a Colombian context. Documentation concerning the *bambuco* justifies a far stronger link with Africa than with Spain.
2. Davidson's observation concerning African rhythms is based on a general ignorance of African and Afro-American rhythms.
3. It could hardly be believed that a "monotonous and heavy" melody could charm the animals of the forest and stop the slave driver's whip (see above). Once again this opinion is based on ignorance of African music and its American derivations. To suggest a relationship



between the *bambuco* and African roots, it is necessary only to identify elements in the *bambuco* which can be found in African music but do not exist in Spanish or Amerindian.

**Association between rhythmic elements of the *bambuco* and African sources**

For this purpose reference will be made to the *bambuco* archetypal phrase.



Fig. 7-34 Archetypal 2-bar phrase for bambucos (See chapter 4).

A phrase of this nature is found nowhere in Spanish music (see chapter 6), whereas, because of its similarity to Jones' (1971, 3) African signature tune, it relates very closely to African music.



Fig. 7-35 The African bell - pattern described by A. M. Jones (1971, 3) as the African 'Signature-tune.'

The reason for naming this pattern in this way is its ubiquity in Africa and its typically African form. Apart from being a bell pattern it can also be played by clapping hands or on drums, and it is found widely in West, Central and East Africa (Jones 1971, 210).



Fig. 7-36 "Inversion" of Jones' African "Signature-tune" (Jones 1971, 210)

The pattern of Fig. 7-35 found in different regions of Africa in diverse forms. An Ewe dance called Abuteni combines this basic bell pattern (Fig. 7-35) with a  $\frac{3}{8}$  figure in the following way, thus accentuating the duple time character of the pattern:

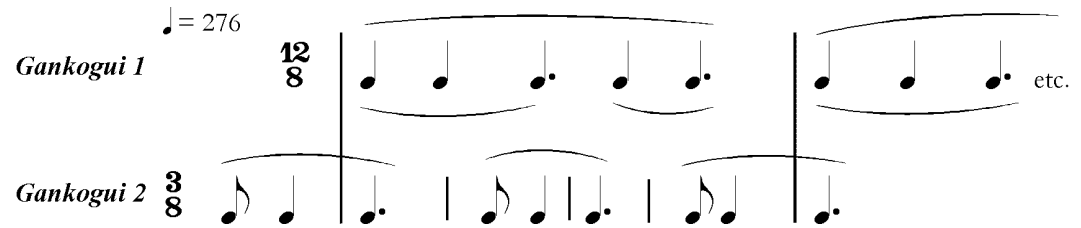


Fig. 7-37 African 'Signature-tune' in Ewe Abuteni dance (Jones 1971, 210).

It combines in double time in the Ewe Asafo dance, with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  figure, thus accentuating its triple time character:

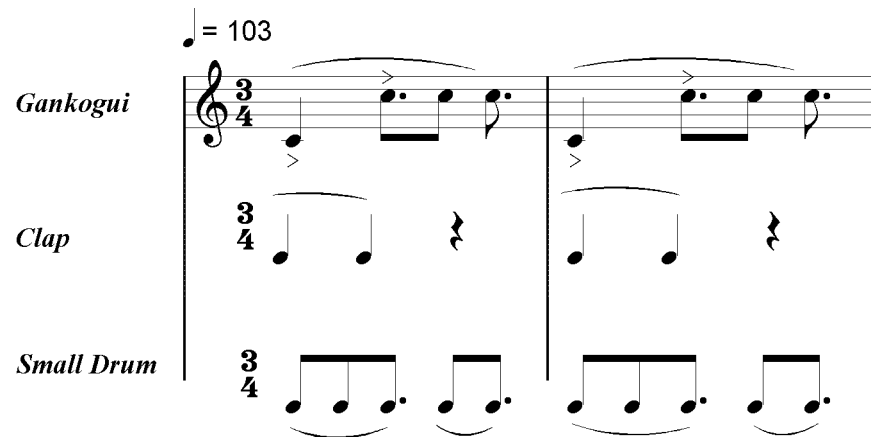


Fig. 7-38 African 'Signature-tune' in Ewe Asafo dance (Jones 1971, 210).

That the 'Signature tune' pattern can appear in different forms can be observed in its manifestation as the Ewe Gankogui pattern:



Fig. 7-39 Standard Ewe Gankogui pattern combined with "Signature-tune" in its 'inverted' basic form (Jones 1971, 211).



It can be observed from these three examples that the basic ‘Signature-tune’ bell pattern can combine with triple or duple rhythmic figures and has a flexibility in the note density within the pattern’s basic rhythmic structure. The fact that it can combine with other rhythmic material to form composite patterns can be seen from the following example in which a variation on the standard *gankogui* pattern (See Fig. 7-39) mixes with a clapping pattern to form a resultant pattern which, when vocal syllables are added, is used by the Ewe as a reminder of the rhythm (Jones 1971, 53-4):

The figure displays three staves of music in 12/8 time. The first staff, labeled 'Gankogui', shows a sequence of eighth notes: quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth. The second staff, labeled 'Clap', shows a sequence of dotted quarter notes: dotted quarter, dotted quarter, dotted quarter, dotted quarter, dotted quarter, dotted quarter, dotted quarter, dotted quarter. The third staff, labeled 'Resultant', shows the combination of these two patterns. It begins with a half rest followed by a quarter note, then continues with eighth notes and dotted quarter notes. A bracket above the first two measures of the resultant pattern indicates a group. Below the resultant staff, the syllables 'GO- dzi GO-GO- dzi GO- dzi GO- dzi' are written, corresponding to the rhythmic pattern.

Fig. 7-40 How a *Gankogui* pattern combines with a clapping figure to form a third distinct, but related pattern (Jones 1971, 53).

The resultant pattern in Fig. 7-40 not only demonstrates the admixing of patterns, but also displays an ambiguity in the notation of the patterns, because although, as Jones (1971, 54) points out, the Western ear will notate the pattern to coincide with the first beat of the claps and the low note of the *gankogui* in the manner shown in the first two staves of Fig. 7-40, the African ear, as seen from where the mnemonic syllables begin in the third staff pattern, clearly hears the beginning of the pattern on a different beat. It will be recalled that an identical situation exists with the perception of the cyclic structure of the *bambuco* resulting in the ambiguity of its notation. In fact the notation as has been used Fig. 7-40 corresponds to the conventional notation of the *bambuco*, in that the first beat played in the pattern is perceived to be the first beat of the basic rhythmic cell :

Figure 7-41 displays four musical staves. The top staff, labeled 'Gankogui', is in 12/8 time and shows a sequence of eighth notes. The second staff, labeled 'Claps', is also in 12/8 time and shows a sequence of eighth notes with a half note. The third staff, labeled 'Resultant', is in 12/8 time and shows a sequence of eighth notes with a half note. The bottom staff, labeled 'Bambuco', is in 3/4 time and shows a sequence of eighth notes with a half note. The Bambuco staff uses conventional notation, while the others use gankogui notation.

Fig. 7-41 Combination of gankogui patterns with conventional  $\frac{3}{4}$  notation for the bambuco.

whereas a notation which takes its point of origin from the first beat of the resultant mnemonic syllable pattern would correspond to the  $\frac{6}{8}$  notation favoured by authors such as Uribe (1987) and Pardo Tovar (1963), in that the first beat played is perceived as an upbeat to the basic rhythmic cell:

Figure 7-42 displays four musical staves. The top staff, labeled 'Mnemonics', is in 3/4 time and shows a sequence of eighth notes with the text 'GO-dzi GO-GO - dzi GO - dzi, GO - dzi.' below it. The second staff, labeled 'Bandola', is in 3/4 time and shows a sequence of eighth notes with a half note. The third staff, labeled 'Tiple', is in 3/4 time and shows a sequence of eighth notes with a half note. The bottom staff, labeled 'Guitar', is in 3/4 time and shows a sequence of eighth notes with a half note. The Bandola and Tiple staves use conventional notation, while the Mnemonics and Guitar staves use gankogui notation.

Fig. 7-42 Shifted  $\frac{6}{8}$  notation for the bambuco together with gankogui mnemonic pattern.

It could be suggested that the conventional notation of the *bambuco* corresponds to a 'European' perception of it while the shifted  $\frac{6}{8}$  notation corresponds to an 'African' perception.

In the following figure another variation on the *gankogui* pattern can be observed to accompany various polyrhythmic figures simultaneously, as occurs to a lesser degree between the guitar and the *tiple* in the *bambuco* (See chapter 4):

The musical score for the Nyayito Dance from Ghana is presented in eight staves. The top staff, Gankogui, is in 12/8 time with a key signature of one flat. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff, Axatse, also in 12/8, provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The third staff, Claps, shows a pattern of clapping in 12/8. The fourth staff, Song, is in 9/8 time and features a melodic line with a long note value. The fifth staff, Master Drum, is in 8/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern. The sixth staff, Sogo, is in 9/8 time and features a melodic line. The seventh staff, Kidi, is in 9/8 time and features a melodic line. The eighth staff, Kagad, is in 9/8 time and features a melodic line.

Fig. 7-43 Excerpt from Nyayito Dance (Ghana) as notated by A. M. Jones (1959, 20).

The 'Signature-tune' can be observed to share many traits with the *bambuco* archetypal figure. First of all their intrinsic similarity can be seen by direct comparison:

The figure shows a direct comparison between two musical patterns. The top staff, labeled 'Archetypal bambuco pattern', is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff, labeled 'African 'Signature-tune'', is in 12/8 time and features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The two patterns are shown side-by-side to highlight their similarities.

Fig. 7-44 Direct comparison between bambuco basic pattern and African standard pattern.

That one is a melodic rhythmic structure and the bell pattern is an accompanying rhythmic does not present any problem because earlier in this chapter it was demonstrated how African rhythmic patterns frequently have manifested themselves as melodic rhythmic patterns in Afro-European genres. These patterns also represents the common link found between the *aguabajo*, the *jota chocoana* and the *bambuco* observed by Pardo Tovar and Urrea Pinzón (Pardo Tovar 1961). Secondly, both patterns can be accompanied by either  $\frac{6}{8}$  and/or  $\frac{3}{4}$  rhythms. Thirdly, both

are able to appear with different note densities within the rhythmic structure. Fourthly, both are ambiguous with respect to the possible manners of notation.

Comparison may also be made between these patterns and the resultant mnemonic pattern of Fig. 7-40

The figure shows three rhythmic patterns in 3/4 time, each spanning four measures. The **Bambuco basic pattern** uses red notes for the first two notes of each measure and black notes for the last two. The **African basic pattern** uses black notes throughout. The **Mnemonic pattern** is represented by the syllables 'GO - dzi' repeated four times, with vertical lines separating the measures.

Fig. 7-45 Comparison between bambuco basic pattern, African standard pattern and mnemonic vocal pattern.

The similarity between the more probable (black) notes of the *bambuco* pattern (See chapter 4) and the accents of the mnemonic pattern is quite striking.

The African pattern appears in diverse forms in different African cultures and with variable rhythmic phrasing in accompanying figures.

The figure displays five variations of a 12/8 'Signature-tune' pattern. The **Yoruba clapping pattern** and **Basic pattern** are associated with **Nigeria**. The **Bemba clapping pattern**, **Lala clapping pattern**, and **Inverted basic pattern** are associated with **Tanzania**. Each pattern is shown with musical notation and a vertical line indicating the end of the sequence.

Fig. 7-46 Variations on basic pattern of African 'Signature-tune' (from Jones 1959, 212-213). The Yoruba pattern corresponds to the 'basic pattern' and the Bemba and Lala to its 'inversion.'

The commonness of this pattern and its variations mean that it would have been very easy for one or various of its manifestations to have been taken to Colombia from Africa and to have been the rhythmic basis for genres like the *bambuco*. In addition the flexibility demonstrated by

the fact that many variations can be found on the basic pattern is consistent with the number of variations that can be found on the basic *bambuco* structure. If one takes the African signature tune as the rhythmic basis of the *bambuco* prevailing over the  $\frac{6}{8}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  bar system then this rhythmic basis could be interpreted as a subdivided  $\frac{12}{8}$  bar:

$$\frac{12}{8} = \frac{4}{8} \text{ ♩ } + \frac{3}{8} \text{ ♩ } + \frac{2}{8} \text{ ♩ } + \frac{3}{8} \text{ ♩ }$$

If then the *bambuco* 'El vaquero' studied in Chapter 4 were to be notated according to the basic pattern of a  $\frac{12}{8}$  bar sub-divided in this manner  $\left[ \frac{4+3+2+3}{8} \right]$  the result would be the following:

Voice  $\frac{4+3+2+3}{8}$

El va - que - ro va to - can - do en su flau - ta cam - pe - si - na

u - na mú - si - ca ar - gen - ti - na que u - na his - to - ria va na - rrán - do

Es un pa - sio - nal ex - ce - so que se en flo - ra en el am - bien - te

y de - ca - e len - ta - men - te co - mo el mur - mu - llo de un be - so.

Fig. 7-47 'El vaquero' notated according to a subdivided  $\frac{12}{8}$  time signature.

It is immediately evident that when compared with the conventional notation there now exists an almost complete coincidence of accented syllables with accents in the rhythmic phrasing implied by the notation.

Voice  $\frac{3}{4}$

El va - **que** - ro va to - **can** - do en su **flau** - ta cam - pe - **si** - na

Fig. 7-48 Excerpt from 'El vaquero' in standard conventional notation.

This is quite remarkable considering that it would have been written in complete ignorance of the existence of the bell pattern on which it is based, as Colombian musicians do not take such clave or bell patterns into account except those who, in more recent decades, have become interested in Cuban-based salsa music.

Arom also discusses this bell pattern but sees it as one result of a formula commonly used to build rhythmic patterns:  $3 + [(n+1) \times 2] + 3 + [(n) \times 2]$ , where  $n$  is an integer. This formula, as has been seen earlier in this chapter, creates different rhythmic patterns which appear as the bases for Latin American clave and rhythmic patterns. The simplest of these, where  $n=0$ , gives





Four bar, sixteen syllable, type 3: 4-16-iii



Four bar, sixteen syllable, type 4: 4-16-iv



Fig. 7-51 Four bar phrase figures which are compatible with one of the  $n=4$  variants of Arom's 'rhythmic oddity' pattern formula (Arom 1991, 248).

In this way it can be observed that the *bambuco*'s melodic rhythmic patterns correspond to African rhythmic formulae in both of its most common formats: that of two bar phrases and that of four bar phrases.

List (1980, 12) notes further rhythmic similarities between African music and Colombian music from the Atlantic Coastal region which have relevance to the *bambuco*. Referring to the concept of conjunct and disjunct rhythms, List (1980, 13) presents the transcription of a *danza de negro* titled 'La rama del tamarindo' (Tamarind branch) as accompanied by a *tambor mayor* (membrane drum), a *guacharaca* (scraper) and *palmetas* (beaters) (See Fig. 7-52). List (1980, 12) notes that the *tambor mayor* and the *guacharaca* play in conjunct cycles divided into two equal parts (of three crotchet beats in this notation). Each of these parts can be divided into three or two subdivisions. However the *palmetas* play a disjunct cycle of the same duration, as it begins and ends exactly one crotchet beat later than the *tambor mayor* and *guacharaca* parts. The first two *palmeta* bars can, like the others, be divided into two equal parts [♩. ♩. and ♩. ♩.], but then each of these can be subdivided only into two more parts [♩. and ♩.], unlike the *tambor mayor* and *guacharaca* which can be subdivided into three. List (1980, 12) observes that the combination of these three cyclic patterns produces off-beat rhythmic accents through the disjunction of one of the cycles (the *palmetas*) and the juxtaposition of two and three quaver notes. He describes this "disjunct cyclic organisation" as "a characteristic of African music" (List 1980, 13).

The figure shows two systems of musical notation for percussion parts. The first system has three staves labeled P, T, and G. Staff P (palmetas) has a 12/8 time signature and contains six dotted half notes. Staff T (tambor mayor) has a 6/4 time signature and contains six quarter notes. Staff G (guacharaca) has a 6/4 time signature and contains six eighth notes. The second system also has three staves labeled P, T, and G. Staff P has a 6/4 time signature for the first measure and a 12/8 time signature for the second measure. Staff T and G have a 6/4 time signature throughout. The notation for T and G in the second system is more complex, involving eighth and sixteenth notes.

Fig. 7-52 *Danza de negros* 'La rama de tamarindo' where the palmetas are denoted P, the tambor mayor, T, and the guacharaca, G (List 1980, 13).

The *bambuco* displays an identical disjunct cyclic organisation, in both the wind and percussion ensembles and the string ensembles:

The figure shows musical notation for the Bambuco, divided into string and percussion sections. The string section includes Tiple and Guitar. The Tiple part is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and features a sequence of chords and single notes, with a red 'B' marking a specific note. The Guitar part is also in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp and features a sequence of chords and single notes, with a red 'A' marking a specific note. The percussion section includes Redoblante, Caja, and Bombo. The Redoblante part is in 3/4 time and features a sequence of eighth notes, with a red 'B' marking a specific note. The Caja part is in 3/4 time and features a sequence of eighth notes, with a red 'B' marking a specific note. The Bombo part is in 3/4 time and features a sequence of eighth notes, with a red 'C' marking a specific note.

Fig. 7-53 Rhythmic elements in the string and percussion accompaniments for the bambuco.

In the case of the string ensemble, the guitar cycle consists of cycles three crotchets long which are divisible into three parts, marked by the bass notes:



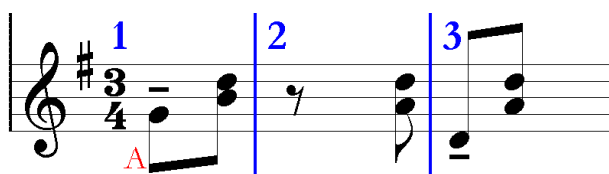


Fig. 7-54 Division of guitar's rhythmic cycle into three parts.

and then into two further subdivisions, which correspond to a bass note and its corresponding off beat chord:

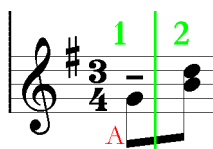


Fig. 7-55 Division of the contents of a crotchet beat into two parts.

The *tiple* part, on the other hand begins one beat later, lasts the same duration of three crotchet beats and is divisible into two parts marked by the accented *rasgueado* chords:

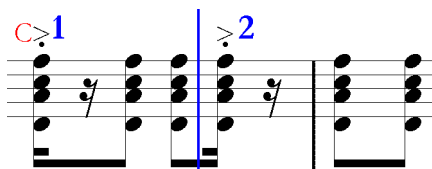


Fig. 7-56 Division of tiple's rhythmic cycle into two parts.

and then into three subdivisions:

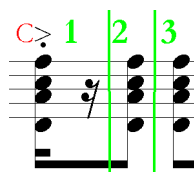


Fig. 7-57 Division of the contents of a dotted crotchet beat into three parts.

In comparison with the *danza de negros* example, the guitar bass notes (A) correspond to the *tambor mayor*, the tiple's accented *rasgueados* (C) correspond to the *palmetas* and the guitar's off beat chords (B) combine with the tiple strummed chords to produce an effect similar to that of the *guacharaca*. Similarly in the percussion example (Fig. 7-53) The beats on the skin (A) match those of the *tambor mayor*, while the beats on the rim (C) and the *redoblante* and *caja* parts (B) compare with the rhythmic effect of the *guacharaca*. Therefore this disjunctive rhythmic structure can be summarised by the basic *tambora* or *bombo* accompanying pattern of:

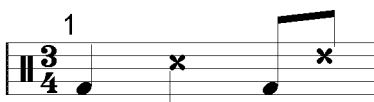


Fig. 7-58 The fundamental rhythmic pattern of the bambuco accompaniment.

The same concept of disjunctive cyclic rhythms is described by Nketia (1975, 134) as “spacing” for which he gives the following examples:

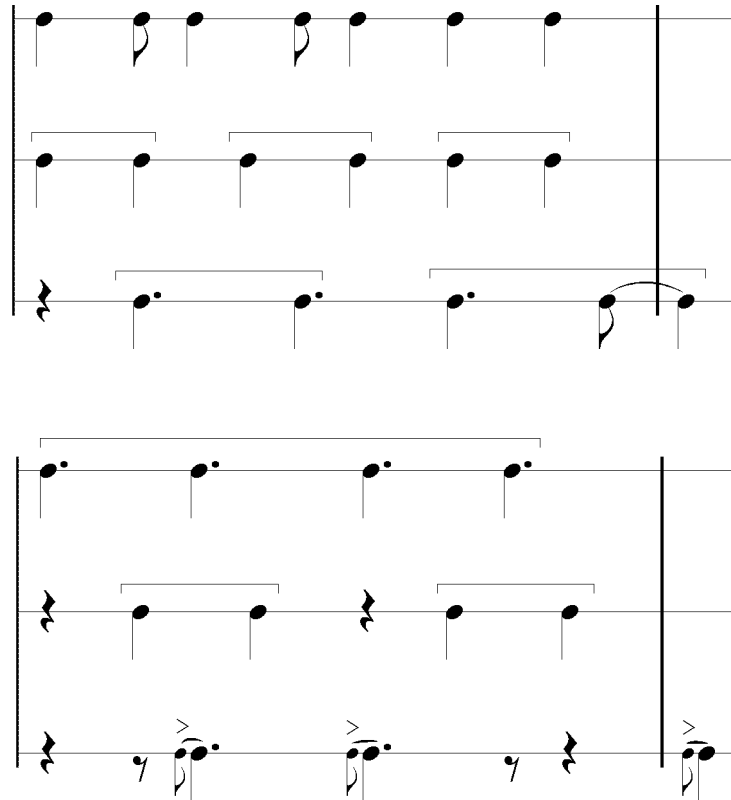


Fig. 7-59 Nketia's examples of the principle of “spacing” (1975, 134).

Both of these examples display a  $\frac{3}{4}$  pattern disjunct by a crotchet beat from a  $\frac{6}{8}$  pattern (middle and lower staves in first example and middle and upper staves in second) which, when combined, give the *bambuco* accompaniment pattern seen in Fig. 7-58.

This same pattern is used by Arom (1991, 280) to illustrate interwoven polyrhythmics as it is practised in Central Africa. It is used by the Aka pygmies in their *mò.nzòlì* dance:

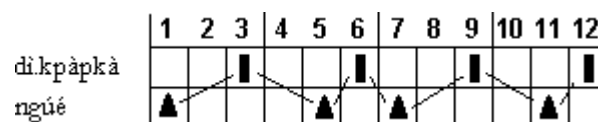


Fig. 7-60 An example of strict irregular interweaving used in the Aka pygmies' *mò.nzòlì* dance (Arom 1991, 280) which is identical to that found in the *bambuco* tambora pattern shown in Fig. 7-58.

Additional rhythmic figures which partially interweave with such a rhythmic base can be found:

|           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |     |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|-----|
| è.ndòmbà  | • | • |   |   | • | • |   |   | • | •  |    |    | (1) |
| di.kpàpkà |   |   | ■ |   |   | ■ |   |   | ■ |    |    | ■  | (2) |
| ngúé      | ▲ |   |   |   | ▲ |   | ▲ |   |   |    | ▲  |    | (3) |

Fig. 7-61 The same mò.nzòli dance patterns with a third figure, the è.ndòmbà, which partially interweaves with the lower two instruments (Arom 1991, 280).

Such a combination is consistent with rhythmic combinations found in the *bambuco*, as in the following excerpt from ‘El natagaimuno’ [corresponding elements are shown as (1), (2) and (3)]:

The figure shows three staves of music. The top staff is labeled 'notated melody' and shows a melody in 3/4 time. The middle staff is labeled 'the same with the last two bars subdivided' and shows the same melody with the last two bars subdivided. The bottom staff is labeled 'tambora accompaniment' and shows a rhythmic pattern with markers (x) and colored dots (blue, green, red) corresponding to the patterns in Fig. 7-61, labeled (1), (2), and (3).

Fig. 7-62 Partial interweaving of rhythmic elements in the Central African manner (Arom 1991, 280) as seen in the bambuco ‘El natagaimuno.’

The fundamental rhythmic patterns of *bambuco* melodies and accompaniments display characteristics of African rhythmic organisation which do not exist in Spanish music, so the only acceptable conclusion is that the rhythmic basis of the *bambuco* came from African roots.

### Association with African sources of instruments used in *bambuco* ensembles

From its earliest associations with Colombia’s Black African community, the *bambuco* was observed to be played on string instruments (*bandola*, *tiple*, *guitar*), tuned percussion (marimba), non-tuned percussion (*bombo*, *tambora*, *guache*, *conuno*, etc.), and, on one occasion in Venezuela, harp. The association with string instruments like the *bandola*, *tiple*, and guitar naturally prompts suggests of links with Spanish culture. However it will be recalled that the *bandurria*, the *bandola*’s forerunner was first documented in Juan Bermudo’s El libro llamado Declaración de instrumentos musicales 1555 (Gill 1984, 604) but was earlier identified as the *mandurria*, in Libro de buen amor (Book of good love) (1389) by Juan Ruiz (Arcipreste de Hita) (Varela 1987, 124). Earlier still, in 1353, 1- to 5- stringed lutes were described in Mali, a possible source area for the *bambuco*, so the African use of such lutes probably predates their Spanish use. It could be speculated even that the term ‘*mandurria*’ comes from ‘Mande,’ the language group that inhabited the region around Bambouk. The Spanish *bandurria*’s history

has already been noted in chapter 4 and there is no doubt that it was a predecessor of the *bandola*. However its own development and origins still leave some avenues for investigation. It will be recalled from chapter 3 that Diego Fallón was responsible for the addition to the *bandola* of its fifth course of strings (see p. 80) while to Morales Pino is given the credit of having added the sixth (see p. 90). The Spanish *bandurria* as it was originally brought to Colombia then presumably had four courses. Since then it also has evolved into an instrument of six courses although these are all double courses whereas the *bandola* uses four triple courses. This may indicate a relationship with the Arabian '*ud*' which has six double courses of string and is tuned identically to the *bandurria* (and the *bandola*). Even though the '*ud*' may or may not have frets, Bermudo's reference to the *bandurria* (writing in 1555 and cited in Varela 1987, 126) referred to *bandurrias* without frets. In Spain there exists an instrument called the *laúd* which, even though its name translates both as 'lute' and as the Arabian '*ud*', is merely a large *bandurria*. This suggests an ongoing relationship with the '*ud*', and therefore with North Africa. It is quite reasonable to propose the string instruments used in Colombia came from Spain and Africa independently and that African musicians came to Colombia playing their African lutes and adapted themselves to the Spanish instruments. The *tiple* and the guitar do not, apart from remote ancestry, appear to have any direct African influence.

The marimba, once played in the performance of *bambucos*, but now restricted to *bambucos viejos* and *currulaos*, is also associated with the *jali* bards of West Africa as the Maninka *balafon*.

The principal percussion instrument associated with the *bambuco* is the *tambora* or *bombo*. In his discussion concerning the *bombo* used in the *conjunto de cumbia* from Colombia's Atlantic Coast, List (1983, 43-53) compares African and European models of large double-headed frame drums which may have contributed to the synthesis of the *bombo* as it is used in Colombia. A Cauca *tambora* in the present author's possession can be compared with List's (1983, 53) summary of the attributes of the African and Portuguese drums. Comparison with the Portuguese *bombo* illustrated in List (1983, 48) reveals an identical skin tightening system to that of the author's Cauca *tambora*. List indicates how the methods for tightening the skins of Portuguese *bombos* share some general principles with those for African double-headed frame drums, and that those similarities are observed in the *bombos* of Atlantic Coast, but the Cauca tightening methods appear to be entirely of Portuguese origin. Iberian *bombos*, unlike African drums, use counter hoops and sound holes as does the Cauca *tambora*. List observes

how the Guambiano Indians in the Andean region of Tierradentro play drums using sticks with no ball and strike the drum both on the shell and on the skin. He considers this to be an African manner of using the drum as, to his knowledge, in Europe large drums are struck on the skin but not on the shell. Garcia Matos' recordings of Spanish folk music (Garcia Matos (B) n.d.), include a tango from the Canary Islands in which a song is accompanied by a flute and a *tambor* which is played on the skin and on the shell. This may well be due to influences which returned from Latin America, especially since the tango first developed in Cuba. On the same recordings, (Garcia Matos (B) n.d.), pieces from Extremadura also use shell and skin techniques which may have come from nearby Portugal. A specifically West African trait is the use of a hollowed out tree trunk as the basis for the shell and it will be recalled that this technique was also used in Andean Colombia in the construction of *tamboras* and in 1961 was still used in Colombia's Chocó region (Pardo Tovar 1961, 10). Portuguese *bombos* use loops which are used to apply tension to the longitudinal ropes, whereas African drums use lateral ropes which circle the longitudinal ropes and thus apply tension. Colombian *tamboras* follow the former principle. It can be observed then that the *tambora* is a hybrid of African and Iberian traits.

The *cununo*, though used today to accompany *currulaos* and *bambucos viejos*, is not used in contemporary *bambuco* ensembles but is important as an instrument in the transition from the African sources of the *bambuco* to the present.

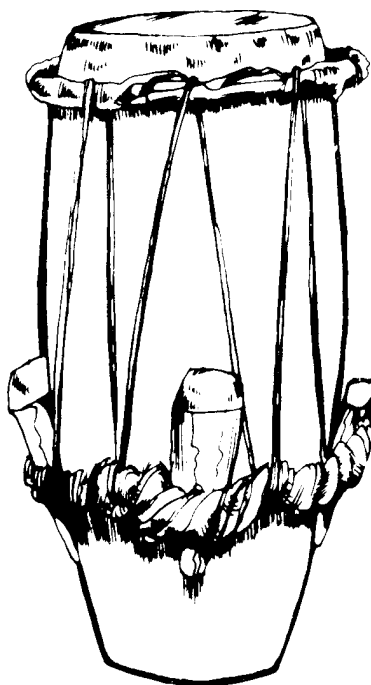


Fig. 7-63 Cununo from Colombia's Pacific Coast (Bermúdez 1987, 116)

Membrane drums are common on Colombia's Atlantic Coast and their relationship to African sources has been thoroughly investigated by List (1983). Their tuning mechanism,

described by List (1983, 33) as “the wedge-girdle type of tension” is the same as that of the *cununo* and List supports Izikowitz’s opinion (1935, 180) that Pre-Columbian Amerindians had cylindrical drums but adopted the African tension technique.

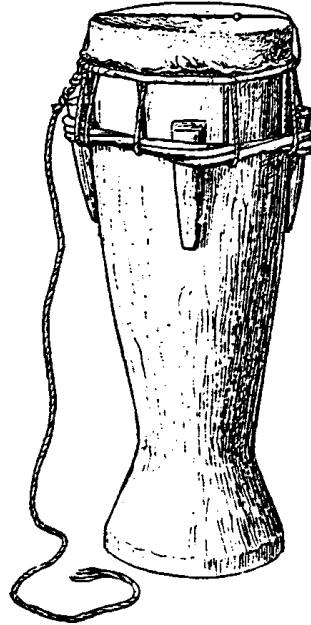


Fig. 7-64 *Cununo* described by List (1983, 33) as *Chocó* Drum.

List (1983, 34) cites Von Hornbostel (1933, 287), Wieschoff (1933, 15 and 47) and others who limit this wedge-girdle tension technique to West Africa and as far as the Central African Republic and the Congo. Of particular interest are *ndumu* drums of the Bangombe pygmies of the Central African Republic which display the same waisted appearance as the *cununo* in Fig. 7-64 as well as sharing the wedge-girdle mechanism.



Fig. 7-65 *Ndumu* drums of the Bangombe Pygmies (List 1983, 35)

### Possible African influence as found in *bambuco* texts

List (1980, 7) cites a study by A. M. Jones (1964,7) which notes that African melodies tend not to fall into repetitive patterns. The meter is produced by external rhythmic elements, while another study by Bird (1972, 208) detected reiterated cycles of four pulses among songs of hunting bards of the Bambara-Maninka people of West Africa. List (1980, 7) analyses a children's song 'La viudita,' (the little widow) the text of which he believes to be of Spanish origin, in which he perceives certain distinguishing features.

La Viudita  
Children's Game Song

♩ = 70

1. Yo **soy** la viu - **di** - ta del **con** - de Lau - **rel.** 2. que  
**quie** - ro ca - **sar** - me, no **quen** - tro con **quien.**

Fig. 7-66 A children's song from Colombia's Atlantic Coast (List 1980, 8)

These features include "elisions of syllables and individual phones and the coalescing of adjacent vowels" (List 1980, 7). This occurs between bars 6 and 7 where 'no en-/cuentro' becomes 'no /quentro.' He cites Jones' comment that such features are common in African song. List (1980, 7) also notes that in this example verbal accents (bold and underlined in this version of the transcription) coincide with the musical pulse. He comments that this is common in Western European folksong but, apart from occurring in simpler forms sung by Bambara-Maninka bards is uncommon in African songs. In the following excerpt from 'El vaquero' more examples of elision can be seen in '-ca ar-', 'que u-' and '-na his-'.

5

u- na **mú-** si- ca **ar-** gen- ti - na que **u-** na his - to - ria va na - rran - do

Fig. 7-67 Excerpt from 'El vaquero.'

Reference to the transcriptions of 'El vaquero' (Fig. 7-47 and Fig. 7-48) shows that using the standard notation there is a certain degree of coincidence between verbal accents and pulse accents, and in the clave based notation, this coincidence occurs with greater frequency although not on every verbal accent.

A second example given by List (1980, 9) is the bullerengue 'Tres golpes' (Three beats).

Tres golpes  
(bullerengue)

$\text{♩} = 125$

*Solo*  $\text{♩} = 125$

1. Tre gol - pe, na - má, 2. sto fue - ron los tre gol

*Chorus*

*Clapping*

4

- pe - 3. que le die-ron a tam - bo - le - ro-

(R) Tre gol - pe, na má - Tre

8

Fig. 7-68 Excerpt from the bullerengue 'Tres golpes' (List 1980, 9)

This example displays a much freer approach to phrase structure, and the relationship between pulse and verbal accent is less regular, in comparison with 'La viudita' and 'El vaquero.' Truncation of syllables occurs, 'tres golpes' becomes 'tre golpe' (bars 1-2, 3-4, and 4-5) in this performance, just as 'nada más, estos' becomes 'na' má, sto' (bars 2-3 and 5-6), 'al tambolero' becomes 'a tambolero' (bars 6-7). Such truncations are a regional mannerism typical of the entire Caribbean rim and islands. In Spanish texts one finds elision of adjacent vowels to occupy a single beat (Garcia-Matos 1978b) but not their coalescing or truncation in this manner, so possibly this also is an Africanism. The call and response pattern characteristic of African vocal music as found in 'Tre golpe' never occurs in the *bambuco*. The coincidence of accented syllables with secondary accented beats and the appearance of non-accented syllables on accented beats described by List (1980, 7) as another characteristic of African music occurs in 'Tre golpe' more than in 'El vaquero.' It can be seen that the *bambuco* lies somewhere between the Spanish accentual model and the African, demonstrating affinities with both. It complies with one of the categories defined by Nketia (1979, 13) of musical expression where African roots can be identified:

Musical expressions which create and develop their primary tonal materials along the lines of Western music, but which utilise African rhythmic materials for the purpose of articulating their basic beat or defining their basic rhythmic motion.

Nketia (1979, 13) in fact adds that "Some of the so-called national music of the Americas belong to this category." As the *bambuco* displays traits found both in European folksong and in the Bambara-Maninka bardic songs and demonstrates a rhythmic structure clearly of African origin, perhaps it could be related to the Bambara-Maninka model, which reinforces an association with Isaacs' Bambouk theory.



### **African content in the *bambuco*'s choreography**

It will be recalled from chapter 6 that Davidson (1970a, 65) discusses and discards the possibility of a relationship between the *rumba chocoana* and the *bambuco* "because the choreography of this *rumba chocoana*, of Black (African) culture, is simply that of the *bambuco*." Consideration of the choreography of the *bambuco* described in chapter 4 enables one to observe some similarities with the Cuban *rumba*. The Cuban *rumba yambú* is, like the *bambuco*, a pursuit dance where the male pursues the female while they act out the rôles of rooster and hen respectively and where they touch bodies in some way. The part of the *bambuco* where the dancers place their arms 'like the handles of a jug' and touch elbows could also be forming 'wings' and touching wingtips. Also the handkerchief featured in the *bambuco* and used by the male is called *rab'e'gallo* (*rabo de gallo*) - rooster's tail. It may be recalled that the "the sweeping," a part of the *bambuco* choreography abandoned by Jaramillo due to its difficulty, was a display of agility on the part of the male dancer. The *rumba columbia*, a variation of the Cuban *rumba*, is a display of male dancing virtuosity. These points could suggest a connection between the choreography of the Afro-Cuban *rumba*, the Colombian *bambuco* and the Colombian *rumba chocoana*, which is, by Davidson's own admission, identical to the *bambuco* and of Afro-Colombian culture.

### **Is there an identifiable primary African source for the *bambuco*?**

As has been stated earlier in this chapter, even though it is to be expected that the musical elements found in the *bambuco* came from diverse places, the most likely specific source for its African origins is the nation of Bambouk, which corresponds to the westernmost region of present day Mali. As the culture of Bambouk was principally Mandinka, and the Mandinka-Bambara culture is presently found distributed through Mali (Mande: Bambara, Malinké and Sarakole), Senegal (Mandingo) Gambia (Mandinka), Guinea (Malinka), Guinea-Bissau (Mandinga) and Côte d'Ivoire (Mande: Malinke, Bambara and Diule), elements related to this culture are now to be found distributed throughout Western Africa (Encarta '96 World Atlas). Affinities between the *bambuco* and the Mandinka-Bambara bardic culture are many:

Both are based on the concept of a vocalist who sings narratives accompanied on a string instrument, or an instrumental piece for a particular solo instrument with mixed or percussion accompaniment.

Both use accompanying instruments in similar contexts: the Colombian *bandola* and *tiple* correspond to the Bambara *ngoni*; the Colombian marimba, used in the prototype *bambuco viejo*, corresponds to the Maninka *balafon*, and the *bambuco* has been associated in Venezuela and in early presentations in Colombia, with the harp which would correspond to the Mandinka *kora*.

There are similarities in the relationship between the text accents and pulse accents between the *bambuco* and the Mandinka-Bambara bardic melodic style.

Among the music of Colombia's Pacific Coast, associated with the *bambuco viejo* and other forms closely related to the *bambuco*, there exists a piece or genre 'bambara negra' which most probably refers to Mali's Bambara culture; it will be also recalled that the Bambara are noted by Davidson among the tribal groups and localities which contributed to the New World slave trade.

In Fig. 2-2, which seems to be a relatively old map, one can observe in the top left corner a bay called 'Bahía de mandinga,' demonstrating that there is a specific association between the Mandinga and sites accessible to Colombia's Pacific Coast.

Countering Bambouk's claim to being the exclusive source of the *bambuco* is that of Angola, where in relatively close proximity, are found the localities of Bambuca and Cauca, so not only the name of the *bambuco* but also that of the region (Cauca) where it began its development in Colombia could have an association with Angola. A possible explanation for this is that both Angola and Bambouk were Portuguese colonies so there would have been continuous communication between the two, and the slaves brought to the New World from these colonies would inevitably have been commingled. Subsequently the combined culture of the slaves from these countries could have merged with musical elements from other African regions to provide the source materials for the formation of the rhythmic bases of the *bambuco* in Colombia.