

## **Cumbia Music in Colombia: Origins, Transformations, and Evolution of a Coastal Music Genre**

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*Costeño* Music and its Socio-cultural Context

The Caribbean coast region of Colombia<sup>i</sup> is called the *Costa*, and its inhabitants are referred to as *costeños*. The *música costeña* (“coastal music”) is a product of tri-ethnic syncretic cultural traditions including Amerindian, Spanish, and African elements (List 1980; 1983), a merging which begins with the Colonial period and continues into the Republican period on the Caribbean Coast.<sup>ii</sup> Traditional music from the Colombian Caribbean coast expresses its tri-ethnic *costeño* identity in vocal styles and musical forms and with its type of instruments and the way they are played.<sup>iii</sup>

The following text describes the aspects and circumstances under which *cumbia*, a coastal musical genre and dance form of peasant origins characterized by an African-derived style, has spread from its local origins in the valley of the Magdalena river to acquire a Colombian national identity, and becoming in a few years a transnational musical phenomenon.

Through its heterogeneity, coastal ethno-organology reflects the different ethnic and cultural contributions that shape *costeño* culture. Instrumental ensembles are the product of this process of hybridization and usually combine instruments of indigenous origins - such as the *gaita* (vertical duct flute) and the *maraca* (rattle) - those of African origins - the *tambor alegre* and the *llamador*, (single-headed drums of different sizes), the *tambora* (double-headed drum), the *caña de millo* (millet-cane transverse clarinet), the *marímbula* (large wooden box lamellaphone), and the *marimba de napa* (musical bow) - and those of European origins (such as the

accordion and the wind instruments of the brass bands).

Most of the “*ritmos*” (as the musical genres are called) of the Colombia’s Atlantic coastal region– such as *tambora*, *bullerengue*, *chandé*, *mapalé*, *cumbia*, *porro*, *puya*, *fandango* – show some “Africanisms” present in their musical structure:

The basic concept operative in most cases is the underlying reiterated cycle of pulses or time-span [...] African influence is therefore to be found in the complex framework built above this foundation, involving pervasive off-beat phrasing, overlapping of call and response patterns, specific uses of the hemiola, and the employment of both disjunct and irregular cycles in the realization of the underlying time-span. These traits plus the density of rhythmic structure displayed in the performances of percussion ensembles relate costeño music to that of sub-Saharan Africa (List 1980a:16-17).

There are various occasions during the year when music is traditionally performed, during the Catholic festivities<sup>iv</sup> such as Christmas, Easter, on patron saints days, and at carnivals and folk festivals (e.g., the *Festival Nacional de la Cumbia* at El Banco, the *Festival de Gaita* in San Jacinto, the *Festival de la Tambora* in Tamalameque, the *Festival del Porro* in San Pelayo, *Festival de la Leyenda Vallenata* in Valledupar, etc.).

#### The *conjuntos costeños*

On the Caribbean coast, musical groups or *conjuntos* (small instrumental sets with four to five elements) represent a further metamorphosis or evolution of the earlier *tambora*,<sup>v</sup> spread among the black communities settled along the Magdalena

river, which stands as an archetype. The *tambora* ensemble consists of percussion and vocals only, including a conical drum with a single head (*currulao*<sup>vi</sup>), a cylindrical drum with a double head (*tambora*), and chant in form of a call-and-response pattern performed by a male/female solo singer alternating with a chorus of women (*cantadoras*), and accompanied by the *palmoteo* (hand-clapping) or beating the *tablitas* or *palmetas* (wooden paddles) of a chorus of women while singing the refrain (Carbó Ronderos 2003). Its repertoire includes the *bailes cantados* (“sung dances”) – such as *bullerengue*, *tambora*, *chandé*, *berroche*, *guacherna* - and songs in call-and-response form (solo singer/chorus), accompanied by drums and handclap.<sup>vii</sup>

As an expression of Afro-Colombian music culture, *tamboras* are quite common in the region considered the “birthplace” of *cumbia*: the Mompos area. Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, many *palenques*, villages formed by fugitive slaves (*cimarrones*) during the colonial period, sprang up in this area.<sup>viii</sup> In fact, from the organological point of view, the line-up of coastal *conjuntos* consists of drums that make up the *tambora*, to which the transverse clarinet, the *caña de millo* (‘cane of millet’) or two vertical flutes (*gaitas*) were added, giving birth, respectively, to the *conjuntos* of *cañamilleros* and *gaiteros*. Throughout this instrumental development, there was a loss of the chorus of female singers (*cantadoras*) and, obviously, of the refrain sang by them (in some cases sang by the same musicians). When the tune is sung, the vocal element appears in a call-and-response form and, consequently, the musicians in the group carry out the choral answer.

## Origins, Dissemination, Instruments, and Form of Cumbia

As a music and dance genre, *cumbia* is the musical expression that is most representative of coastal oral traditional culture. It is the artistic and cultural product of the rural and artisan classes, which reveal a tri-cultural Indo-Afro-Hispanic heritage, although the African component is dominant. In traditional *costeño* music culture, “cumbia” is a term that has a variety of connotations: it refers at the same time to a rhythm, to a musical genre, and to a dance.

As music and dance, *cumbia* originates in the upper part of the Magdalena River, in the zone called Mompos Depression, which is located at the confluence of the Magdalena and Cauca rivers, between the cities of Mompos and Plato (Fals Borda 1986b: 132), and its epicenter is located at the nearby city of El Banco, where the *Festival de la Cumbia* takes place since 1970. Later, the port city of Barranquilla, located at the mouth of the Magdalena River, became the center of dissemination of the *cumbia*. Every year, since the half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, hosts the *Carnaval*, a carnival festival in which traditional music and dance ensembles come from all over the cities and villages of the Caribbean coast and valley of the Magdalena river to perform at the *desfile* (“parade”) along with the *comparsas*. (Friedemann 1985).

The etymology of the term “cumbia” is controversial. Segun Fernando Ortiz, «*kumba* fue toponimico y gentilicio muy extendido en Africa, desde el norte de Guinea al Congo» y agrega que «la misma raiz hallase entre los carabalis, que llaman *ekombi* a “cierta danza de mujeres”, llamada tambien *tukhubé*» (Ortiz 1985:183). Historian Carlos Esteban Deive (1974: 19) contends the term *cumbancha* comes from the *nkumba* word for navel. On the other hand, Nicolás Del Castillo Mathieu suggests instead the terms *cumbia* and *cumbiamba* probably derive from kikongo *ngoma*, *nkumbi* that signifies “drum” (Del Castillo Mathieu 1982: 221), and T. K. Biaya

claims that the name *cyombela*, which refers to the percussionist Luba-Kasai from the Congo, comes from *komba* (*ngoma*), meaning “beat on the drum” (Biaya 1993: 204). El termino *cumbé* indica en la Isla de Annobón (Guinea Ecuatorial) un tambor cuadrado con patas para acompañar la danza del mismo nombre. El tambor es originario de Jamaica - donde los cimarrones lo llamaban *gombay* o *goombah* (Roberts 1926) - y llegó a partir del siglo XIX a la Isla de Annobón a través de los inmigrantes de Freetown en Sierra Leona que es a donde llevaron a los cimarrones jamaicanos y que forman el grupo Krio (Creole en Sierra Leona) (Horton 1999, Aranzadi 2009). *Cumbé* was also the name given to the towns founded by fugitive slaves in Venezuela (called *palenques* in Colombia and *quilombos* in Brasil) during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (De Granda 1970: 452; Bermúdez 1992: 61-2). The same name of *cumbé* also turns up in the catalogue for Mexican string instruments, the *tablatura de vihuela* from 1740, where amongst many dances listed from the colonial period, there is an entry marked “*cumbees o cantos negros*” with the subtitle “*cantos en idioma guinea*” (Stevenson 1971:162).<sup>ix</sup>

The hypothesis on the origin of *cumbia* as a ritual initiation dance from Central Africa, based on etymological similarities, is also quite appealing:

- a) In the upper region of Zaire, an initiation ceremony called *kikumbi* takes place, which includes dances comparable to the Brazilian *batuque* of *kongo* origin (Kazadi wa Mukuna 1979);<sup>x</sup>
- b) *Likumbi* is the name of the shelter where is housed a male initiation rite (*jando*) of the Makonde of the northeastern Mozambique (Ndege 2007:99);
- c) *Nkumbi* is the initiation ritual of the Mbo of the Ituri Forest (in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) (Towles 1993);

d) In the female initiation rites of the Tsonga, fertility songs are sung and the *khomba* dance is performed with the purpose of encouraging women's fertility (Johnston 1974).

Nevertheless, Colombian *cumbia* bears no ritual connotation at all and, according to existing written and oral sources, does not appear to have had any in the past either. At present, just like in the past, the traditional occasions when *cumbia* surfaces are mainly folk festivals, carnivals (the *Carnaval de Barranquilla*, for example), or on holidays of the Catholic liturgical calendar (e.g., the celebration of the Virgin of Candelaria, by the hill of La Popa in Cartagena de Indias, during the late month of November).

According to the historical sources, *cumbia* does not seem very old; its origin does not appear to go back to the colonial era, but rather to the Republican period. The first documented written comment on *cumbia* dates back to the end of the 19th century, in the newspaper *El Porvenir* from Cartagena de Indias. On March 2, 1879, there is a reference to the *cumbiamba* performed during the festival for the Virgin of Candelaria:

At night you hear the *cumbiamba*, a popular dance whose music consists of a *flauta de millo* and a drum that produced a monotonous, but rhythmic sound. It is danced in a circle, and the man makes bizarre and graceful movements to the sound of the drum, while the woman holds a bundle of burning candles on her head, covered by a pretty handkerchief, which catches fire at the end, when the candles go out; that is the splendor of the dance.<sup>xi</sup>

Nevertheless, from the choreographic perspective, *cumbia* is a Spanish-like court dance that is characterized by a lover's duel, in which movements simulate a game of repulsion and attraction between two dancers (the *cumbiamberos*). It is performed by a couple dancing in a circle counterclockwise around a group of musicians. As it is usually performed at night, the woman carries a bundle of lit candles that she uses to light and to push away the man, who pursues her by circling her with open arms. With the other hand, the woman holds the tip of her long skirt (*pollera*), and in a standing position, swings her hips and takes small steps, all the while trying to not be touched by her partner. The male turns around the woman with a hat (the traditional *sombrero vueltiao*) that he try to put on her as a symbol of the amorous conquest.

In terms of musical performance, in its most conventional variety, Colombian *cumbia* is exclusively instrumental (Escalante 1964; D. Zapata 1967; List 1980b). The *cañamillero* ensemble (or *cumbiamba*), made up of the *caña de millo*, the *tambor alegre*, the *tambor llamador*, the *tambora* and the *guache*.

The *caña de millo* (also known as *millo*, *pito*, or *pito atravesao*) is not really a flute (Abadia 1983; 1991), as it could appear, but is rather a transverse ideoglottic clarinet, originally made of millet, nowadays often made from a palm called *lata* (*Bactris guineensis*). It consists of a short cane with a tongue cut in one end to act as a reed with four finger holes, and the reed is fitted with a small thread that catches between the teeth in order to adjust the sound and to produce the effect of vibration *vibrato*. The technique involves the inhalation and exhalation of air through the reed. The resulting sound is sharp and nasal-like.

The origin of this instrument is contentious. According to the Africanist perspective of foremost ethnomusicologist George List,

There is no evidence that the clarinet existed in South America in pre-Colombian period. There are no archaeological findings of clarinets, no reproductions of clarinets on artifacts, and no references to such an instrument in early historical literature. [...] To my knowledge, a transverse ideoglottic clarinet, that is, a clarinet held horizontally with the reed cut from and remaining attached to the tube of cane, is found in the Western Hemisphere only in the Atlantic coastal region of Colombia. It is apparently played only by the Spanish-speaking people of the lowlands, not by the Indians (List 1983:61).

In Africa, the transverse ideoglottic clarinet with a simple reed is found in the Sahel belt area, where pastoral nomadic populations use it (and it is the same area where the millet is grown). According to List (1983), the *caña de millo* is a modified version of the *bobiyele* played by the Fulbe (Fulani) of Burkina Faso, and of the *bounkam* of the Bissa of Burkina Faso, and also of the *kamko* of the Kasera-Nakari in the north of Ghana. Thus, “the source of the *caña de millo* is Africa and the clarinets like the *bobiyele*, the *bounkam*, and the *kamko* are its progenitors” (List 1983:65). These African examples are transverse clarinets made from a stalk of millet cane, with the reed cut from the side of the cane. The performance is based on the cyclical breathing resulting from the emission of sound while inhaling and exhaling without interruption. It should be noted that there are also surprising similarities with the transverse *libo* clarinet of the Hausa of Chad. This latter instrument also comes from the same type of millet cane, and is also equipped with a small string that, when played, adjusts the sounds that are produced.<sup>xii</sup> According to the hypothesis regarding the indigenous origin of the *caña de millo* (Abadia 1973; 1983; 1991, Bermúdez 1985), the Wayúu

Indians from the Guajira Peninsula use a very similar instrument: the transverse ideoglottic clarinet called *massi* and *wotorroyoi*. But it also could be possible that the Wayúu (known also as Guajiros) adopted recently this instruments from the Afro-Colombian musical culture.

The *tambor alegre*<sup>xiii</sup> (or the female drum) is a conical drum, with a drumhead made of goat skin, and built with wood of the *banco blanco* (*Gyrocarpus americana*). Its tension system in “V” is made out of wooden wedges and pieces of string from the *fique* plant (*Furcraea andina*). The *llamador*<sup>xiv</sup> (or male drum) is equal to the previous drum in its form, material, and system of tension, but its dimensions are smaller. The *tambor alegre* has the role of “cheering up,” “improvising,” or varying around a pre-defined rhythmic base, while the *llamador* performs a constant, unvaried isorhythmic pulsation on the offbeat.

The *tambor alegre* and the *tambor llamador* are drums with a single head and a “wedge-hoop” tension system that displays notable structural similarities with some African drums, such as the *sangbei* from the Susu and Mende peoples in Sierra Leona (List 1983), and with certain Afro-Venezuelan drums (*chimbangueles*), Afro-Panamanian drums (*pujador*, *llamador*, and *repicador*), and Afro-Brazilian drums (*atabaques*). All of these types of drums are very similar to the sacred *enkomo* drums of the secret society of Abakuá or Ñáñigos (Cuba), which make up part of the Carabalí.<sup>xv</sup>

The *tambora*<sup>xvi</sup> is a cylindrical bass drum with two heads joined together with a “zigzag” tension system. It is placed horizontally on a wooden rack and played with two drumsticks that alternate between the drumhead and the shell of the drum. Drums with double heads of this type are found in the Gulf of Guinea, such as the *tempe* drum of Temne in Sierra Leone and the *gbùn gbùn* drum of Kpelle in Liberia (List

1983; Stone 1982).

Finally, the *guache* or *guacho* (from the Quechua term *huachi*) is a tubular rattle, originally made from *guadua* bamboo (*Bambusa americana*). Today it is generally made of metal and filled with seeds.

Another group related to the playing of *cumbia*<sup>xvii</sup> is the *conjunto de gaitas*, quite common in the coastal savannah region, which includes approximately the departments of Córdoba, Sucre, and Bolívar. This ensemble is traditionally formed by two *gaitas* (*macho*, “male” and *hembra*, “female”) with the *maraca*, the *tambor alegre*, and the *tambor llamador* (List 1973; 1983; 1987). The function of the *gaita hembra* is to play the melody, while the role of the *gaita macho* is to emphasize just a few notes of the melodic line. The best known example of this kind of band is the group Gaiteros de San Jacinto.

The *gaita*<sup>xviii</sup> is a flute of indigenous origin. The *gaitas*<sup>xix</sup> are identical to the *kuizi* (*kùisi sigì* e *kùisi bunzi*) flutes of the Kogi Indians from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Izikowitz 1935; Abadia 1983; 1991) and are similar to the flutes called *tolo*, *suarra*, or *supé*, used in pairs (male and female) by the Kuna Indians of the Darién region near the Colombia/Panama border and the San Blas Islands (Garay 1930; Taylor 1968; List 1973, Marulanda 1984, Abadia 1973; 1983; 1991). The *maraca* (*tani* in Kogi language, *na o nasi* in Kuna language) is a rattle of the Arawak Indians (Tro Pérez 1978), made from a dry fruit, filled with seeds, called *totumo* (*Crescentia cujete*). Among the *indios*, the *maraca* has a dual function: it's the musical instrument for parties, and the ritual instrument for the healing rites of the shaman. “*Gaita*” is also the name given by *gaiteros* to the musical genre corresponding to *cumbia* when it is played with *gaitas* flutes.

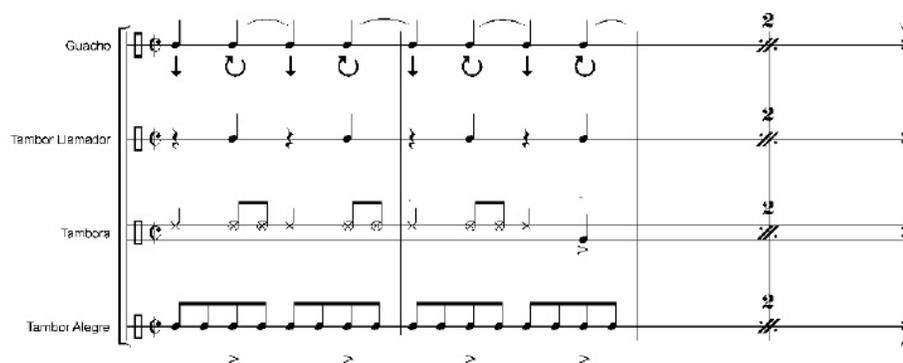
As mentioned, traditional *cumbia* is an exclusively instrumental music genre

(List 1980). Later on, singing was added to the *cumbia* in the form of quartets (stanzas of four octo-syllabic lines) sung by one of the musicians of the group, which alternates with the refrain of the chorus through a responsorial song (soloist/chorus).

*Cumbia* is in double simple time (2/2 or 2/4). The *millo* (clarinet) begins and then the *tambora* follows, which alternates with the *paloteo*, the beating on the wooden shell of the drum using two sticks. Afterwards, the *llamador* comes in, giving a regular pulse offbeat, and the *guacho* is shaken upwards and downwards, emphasizing the binary scansion and accentuating the offbeat. The *bullerengue* (a *baile cantado*) could be considered a precursor of *cumbia* because its rhythm is also characterized by the off-beat played by the *llamador*. The *tambor alegre* plays a rhythmic *ostinato* with short variations at the end of each phrases. The song is fragmented by *revuelos*, meaning rhythmic variations or improvisations.

Improvisation is allowed to all the instruments, with the exception of the *llamador* (whose role is to maintain a regular, repeated pulse), and its function is to carry the song to a climax, thus developing the same provocative function as the *gritos* (cries).

Rhythmic structure of *cumbia*:



Distribution and Circulation: radio broadcasting

Since the 1930s, radio broadcasting has played a significant role in the diffusion of Caribbean and Latin American music (above all, the Cuban *son*, the

Mexican *ranchera*, the Argentinean *tango* and the Brazilian *maxixe*), as well as the North American *foxtrot*. The first radio broadcast in Colombia, *La Voz de Barranquilla*, was created in Barranquilla in 1929. In 1934, just a few years later, a new radio station from Barranquilla, called the *Emisora Atlántico*, followed up. Around the same time, another radio station emerged in Cartagena, called *La Voz de Laboratorios Fuentes* (later simply called *Emisora Fuentes*). Cuban music (*bolero*, *son*, *rumba*, *guaracha*, *danzón*) had an immense impact on the Colombian audience; its success favored the process of “Cubanization” as a stylistic transformation of Colombian music.<sup>xx</sup> In brief, radio stations of Barranquilla (*La Voz de Barranquilla*), Bogotá (*La Voz de la Víctor*), and Cartagena (*Emisora Fuentes*) all broadcast the recordings of Trío Matamoros, Sonora Matancera, Sexteto Habanero,<sup>xxi</sup> Septeto Nacional, and the great Cuban orchestras (Benny Moré, Machito, Xavier Cugat, Pérez Prado). Cuban bands were touring in Colombia in the 1930s, such as Trío Matamoros and the orquesta Casino de La Playa, the last one performing on the radio stations *La Voz de la Víctor*, *La Voz de Barranquilla* and *Emisora Fuentes* (Betancur Alvarez 1993).

During this period, broadcast music was partly recorded and performed live at the radio station’s studio. Each radio station had a stable orchestra that accompanied the guest soloists (as in the case of the Emisora Atlántico Jazz Band, the Orquesta Emisora Fuentes, the Orquesta La Voz de Barranquilla, etc.). The programming could not sustain itself solely on recordings, because almost all of them were imported and, as a result, were expensive. Consequently, this process led to the orchestration of folk music tunes, which had significant implications on contemporary Colombian popular music. The “cubanization” of the arrangements used to incorporate afro-cuban musical instruments: congas, bongos, maracas, claves, güiro and trumpets.

Thanks to the orchestral arrangements of many radio station bands, the cultivated “urban” interpretation of traditional “rural” melodies (originally performed by *conjuntos* and brass bands) led to a transformation of the folk repertoires into new urban musical forms: “Radio, then, not only provided a workplace for musicians and a point of circulation for their efforts, but also collaborated on the development of an urban musical culture for the Atlantic Coast” (González 1989:27).

The “tropicalization” of *costeño* music

In the 1940s and 1950s, the process of adapting traditional rhythms and melodies to cosmopolitan dance orchestras brought a transformation from “*música costeña*” to “*música tropical*”. The rhythmic and melodic structures of *costeño* musical genres (*cumbia, gaita, porro, fandango*) traditionally interpreted by groups of *gaiteros* and *milleros*, were stylized and orchestrated by composers and conductors such as Lucho Bermúdez (Luis Eduardo Bermudez, 1912-1994) and “Pacho” Galán (Francisco Galán, 1904-1988).<sup>xxii</sup> Both had come to the regional music tradition of the coast to give stylized orchestral arrangements and big-band sound to the music. Their music was halfway between the big band jazz style of Benny Goodman and the *mambo* of the Pérez Prado, Xavier Cugat and Benny Moré orchestras (Xavier Cugat was touring in Colombia in 1951, Benny Moré in 1955 and Pérez Prado in 1966) (Betancur Alvarez 1993). At the same time, they were inspired by the *bandas de viento* (brass bands) from the towns in the Sinú River Valley, above all in San Pelayo (Córdoba), which was considered the “cradle of *porro*,” and where the brass band style was strong and rooted in local tradition.

Peter Wade clarifies:

... people such as Bermúdez and Galán came from

backgrounds that had strong elements of the provincial middle class but had some links with rural lower-class experience as well; they had formal musical training, not always in a conservatory, but they were also familiar with Costeño instruments and styles from traditional peasant repertoire and from the *bandas de viento*. They knew, played, and often composed a wide range of styles, including *bambucos* and *pasillos*, but they wanted to bring Costeño music, albeit in highly adapted form, into the same arena—this was their way of making a mark (Wade 2000:87).

Since they conveyed supplementary meaning and rendered melodies recognizable to wide audiences, orchestral arrangements habitually respected the rhythmic structure of traditional genres. It is also imperative to consider the significance of the musical training of these musicians and conductors: Lucho Bermúdez, Pacho Galán, and Antonio María Peñalosa were all conductors who, during their youth, had participated in folk *bandas de viento*.

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *bandas de viento* emerged next to traditional groups in some towns in the department of Córdoba (San Pelayo, in particular) (Fals Borda 1986a; Fortich Díaz 1994). Since then, folk music of the Sinú River Valley (*porro*<sup>xxiii</sup> and *fandango*) was performed by traditional *conjuntos* (*gaiteros* and *cañamilleros*), or by a *banda de viento*, better known as *papayera*,<sup>xxiv</sup> made up of clarinets, trumpets, sax, bass drum, snare drum, and cymbals (Loteró Botero 1989). Usually, *banda* musicians do not know how to read written music, but rather play “by ear.” In other words, their training is still mostly through oral tradition. Young apprentices of wind instruments practice by making small lemon leaves vibrate between their lips, to

imitate the trumpets and clarinets, making true “brass bands” called *bandas de hojita* (little leaves ensembles).

One of the most popular *bandas de viento* from the 1950s and 1960s, Pedro Laza y sus Pelayeros, is a quintessential example of this kind of cultural practice. Founded by Laza (1904-1980) in 1952, its collection of works was made up mostly of *porros* and *fandangos*, in accordance with local *banda* tradition, and some *cumbias* as well. Its interpretation of coastal music was a unique combination of orchestral style and the typical sounds of a village *banda* flavour, called *sabanera* (from the savannah).

*Costeño* music—particularly *cumbia* and *porro*—has strong African elements. Thus, to make it more accessible (aesthetically) and acceptable (socially) among the middle classes of the interior of the country, and to contribute to its international diffusion, great ballroom dance orchestras reinterpreted it in a stylized and orchestrated form, eliminating all the African-derived musical instruments:

*Cumbia* and other styles that belong to coastal music are a classic instantiation of a black inspirational tradition that, with time, has been turning “white.” Previously, it was attacked, when in the past it was practiced independently by blacks. Nevertheless, it converts into a form that is more and more acceptable to the extent that it extends through the non-black world, losing its “Africanism” and its principal association with black people, although it retains its attractive quality of “hot.” It is not a coincidence then that tropical music is also known as “hot, sexy” music. (Wade 1997: 334-5)

The white and mestizo population of the interior of the Andean interior, that

listened mostly to Andean music (*bambuco* and *pasillo*), began to listen and dance to coastal music (*cumbia* and *porro*) besides Cuban genres (*bolero*, *guaracha*, *son*, and *rumba*).

National and international diffusion of orchestrated *cumbia* acquired a primary role in the relationship between music and national identity and the process of homogenising tendencies of nationalism. Urban orchestrated *cumbia* begins to replace the *bambuco*, an Andean music genre till then considered the most representative form of traditional music in Colombia, as the flag of national identity:

Colombia was no longer represented either at home or abroad by a style associated with the Andean interior, center of power, wealth and ‘civilization’; it was now represented by tropical music from the Caribbean coastal region, seen as poor, backward, ‘hot’ (climatically, sexually, and musically) and ‘black’ (at least by association, even if many of the musicians in the dance bands, even the Costeño ones, were whites or light-coloured mestizos) (Wade 1998: 9).

Orchestras played in the social clubs for the elite in the largest Andean cities, such as Bogotá and Medellín, or broadcast live by radio stations. Stylized and orchestrated *cumbia* by the great ballroom dance orchestras was popularized as *música tropical* (tropical music) in other Latin American countries: Lucho Bermúdez played with his orchestra in Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, and the United States; Pacho Galán played in Central America and Venezuela (Wade 2000: 173).

National record production was also fundamental to the process of diffusion of *música tropical*, especially the role played by the first Colombian record label, *Discos Fuentes*, founded by Antonio Fuentes (1907-1985) in Cartagena (later transferred to

Medellín) in 1934. Fuentes was the same person who had been equally important as promoter of the first radio station in Cartagena, *Emisora Fuentes*, and, who had also, in the 1940s, regularly transmitted the music produced by the *Orquesta Emisora Fuentes*. In the following years, other record labels that will make history with Colombian popular music eventually pop up: *Discos Tropical*, founded by Emilio Fortou in Barranquilla in 1945, and *Discos Sonolux*, founded in Medellín in 1949.<sup>xxv</sup>

Currently, for the old generation living in the interior of the country, the term “cumbia” often refers to the stylized *cumbia* from the great orchestra shows of the 1940s and 1950s. Such a process of identification began when young clarinet player Lucho Bermúdez recorded the track “Danza negra” (Black Dance),<sup>xxvi</sup> a *cumbia* sung by vocalist Matilde Díaz; the song was so successful that people began to identify it as *the* Colombian *cumbia* (as the text of the song suggests). Nowadays, some hits from the 1940s and 1950s, such as the *cumbias* “Danza negra” and “Colombia, tierra querida” (Colombia, Beloved Country) or the *mapalé* “Prende la vela” (Light the Candle) by Lucho Bermúdez, are considered classics and known throughout the entire country, even today, half a century after their inception. Indeed, these songs have become “musical icons” of Colombian national identity.

On one hand, the commercialization of *cumbia* has assisted its national and international dissemination through the production of recordings and increased radio playtime; on the other, it has also generated significant stylistic changes that have brought into question issues of authenticity and the alleged degeneration of *cumbia*. Musician Luis Antonio Escobar point out that the passage of the *cumbia* from the “folk” to the “popular” domain caused a loss of authenticity:

“In this sense we have to consider another transition from folk to popular domain. Such is the case of famous musicians who adopted some native rhythms such as *cumbia* and *porro*,

making arrangements and changing their character.

I refer particularly to Lucho Bermúdez, a musician of immense musical talent the author of numerous *porros*, *cumbias* and other forms, trying to represent a new kind of mixture between Indian, black and white components. This new musical trend, synthesis of a new people of Cartagena, is another important expression, but it belongs to the Colombian popular music in some cases covered with international orchestration, which needs a certain number of harmonies, rhythms and instruments that are going to represent another musical level, perhaps more striking but less authentic” (Escobar 1985:84).

Folklorist José Portaccio writes, “One cannot deny that cumbias that have had national and international impact are the ones that are sung and orchestrated, contrary to the true and authentic performance, which corresponds to *milleros* and drum ensembles. The taped recordings of these groups hardly enjoy regional distribution and are very scarce through the entire country” (Portaccio 1995: 69). In fact, it is surprising to note the enormous stylistic differences separating the two musical phenomena under the same name of “cumbia.” It’s simply a matter of comparing, for instance, the “rural, traditional” cumbia played with autochthonic instruments by the *cañamilleros* of river towns like Mahates, Botón de Leyva, or El Banco, with a “popular, urban” cumbia, stylized, and with vocals, like “*La Pollera Colorá*” (The Red Skirt) by Wilson Choperena, sang by its composer and performed by Pedro Salcedo’s orchestra (and successfully released by Discos Tropical), which eventually became like a popular national anthem.

The “Made for Export” Cumbia

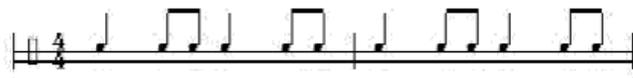
The 1960s mark the progressive decline of ballroom dance orchestras and the rise of the smaller combos. With an instrumental structure made up basically of a brass band, electric bass, and two accordions (including the virtuoso *acordeonero* Alfredo Gutiérrez), *Los Corraleros de Majagual*, contributed to the circulation and popularization of *cumbia* and *vallenato* in the entire country and in other nations where they played, like Mexico, Ecuador, and Peru. Another band with a brief national popularity but a strong impact outside the country, was the group *Sonora Dinamita* (inspired by Cuba's *Sonora Matancera*), renowned for its adoption of an electric bass and the accordion. The *Sonora Dinamita*, started in Cartagena in 1960 by Lucho Argaín (Lucho Pérez Cedrón) played a crucial role in spreading a simplified form of *cumbia*. This kind of *cumbia de exportación* (export cumbia) (Escobar 1985; Pacini Hernandez 1992) began to circulate all over Latin America, enjoying particular acceptance in countries like Mexico, Peru, Argentina, and Chile. As Deborah Pacini Hernandez writes:

Other Colombian musicians and bands—recognizing cumbia's economic potential outside the country, also have continued to record cumbia produced exclusively for export to Central America and the Andean nations. Nevertheless, these cumbias have increasingly been transformed to adapt to the tastes of populations with very different aesthetic traditions than those from the strongly African-derived coastal culture from which cumbia originally emerged. Most noticeably, these made-for-export cumbias have lost the rhythmic complexity of their predecessor, the cumbia *costeña* [...] As a result, these cumbias are uncategorically rejected by *costeños*, who refer to them

politely as *cumbias del interior* (cumbias from the highland interior), or more scornfully as *cumbias gallegas*, the closest (figurative) translation of which I can think of is “honky cumbias” (Pacini Hernandez 1992:292).

The commercial and standardized variant of *cumbia*, called (as pejorative) *chucu-chucu*, spreading in all Latin American countries, was so successful that it went through a process of appropriation and transformation according to the local taste. In the 80s’, Peruvian cumbia or *chicha*, for example, adopted the pentatonic melodies from the Andean *huayno* adding the rhythmic structure from the Caribbean *cumbia* (such is the case of the hit “El Aguajal” by Los Shapis, a *chicha* version of the *huayno* “El Alisal”). Then, in the 90s’, the Peruvian *tecno-cumbia* left the folk *huayno* component and mixing Colombian *cumbia* with *tex-mex* style (such is the case of the singer Rosy War).

Mexican or Peruvian *cumbias* are usually built on a catchy melodic phrase based on the following rhythmic pattern (usually played by a scraper):



and accenting the off-beats (beats 2 and 4) or “contratiempo” (usually played by



while bass plays on I and II degree (or IV-V degree) and keyboards play a chord on the second beat of each bar, with a pattern like this:



(excerpt by Manuel 1988:51)

### Cumbia and Other Genres

In the 1970s and 1980s, the *cumbia* had to confront, at the national level, the emergence and growing admiration for another music genre: *vallenato*. Named after its main center of dissemination, the city of Valledupar, *vallenato* is a musical genre played in its traditional form by a an accordion ensemble, formed by the *acordeón* (diatonic accordion), the *caja* (drum), and the *guacharaca* (scraper), whose repertoire consists of four basic music forms: *son*, *paseo*, *merengue*, and *puya*.

Under the impetus given by the first governor of Cesar and former-President of Colombia, Alfonso López Michelsen (1913-2007), *vallenato* changed from a regional folk expression of “La Provincia” (the Province, meaning, the department of Cesar) into a national popular music for the masses. López Michelsen was a steadfast supporter of *vallenato*, and the principal promoter of the now renowned *Festival de la Leyenda Vallenata* (1967), together with local politician Consuelo Araújo and composer Rafael Escalona. Having garnered “official validation” thanks to a process of increased acceptance by the Andean middle classes and enjoying steady support by selected members of Bogotá’s ruling classes, *vallenato* was loosing its plebeian connotations (being an expression of the lower social strata of the north-east coastal populations) and an image closely associated with drug trafficking and smuggling during the latter 1970s, to a type of music disseminated and appreciated by the entire

country, and all social classes.

*Vallenato*'s most recent revival as a widespread middle-class phenomenon takes place in the early 1990s with singer and actor Carlos Vives, who, after playing the role of Rafael Escalona<sup>xxvii</sup> on a hit soap opera produced by Caracol TV in 1991, asserts himself as a *rock-vallenato-star*. Vives' music finds inspiration in the "classics" of *vallenato* repertoire composed by Rafael Escalona, and accordionists like Francisco "Pacho" Rada, Alejandro "Alejo" Durán, Emiliano Zuleta, among the others. In this way, through the novel arrangement of instruments (integrating the *gaitas*, drums, and accordion to the electric bass and drums) and musical styles (traditional Caribbean "ritmos", including *cumbia*, with contemporary urban rock), the singer from Santa Marta managed to bestow a modern and innovative air to *vallenato*, creating a new tendency that connects to the tastes of a large portion of Colombia's audiences, comprising both old and new generations, as well as different social classes: "By the early 1990s, *vallenato* had come to replace *música tropical* as the new popular Colombian sound" (Waxer 2001:148).

In the 1980s, the panorama of Colombian music began to change due to the influence of *salsa*, a Cuban-based popular dance music developed by Latinos in New York during the 1960s and 1970s. The music became apparent in the city of Cali, the principal urban center on the Colombian Pacific coast, with a large percentage of Afro-descendent population. It is precisely in Cali and the nearby port of Buenaventura that the first groups of Colombian salsa emerged: *Peregoyo y su Combo Vacana*, *Guayacán*, and *Grupo Niche* (whose leader, Joe Arroyo, will eventually have an extremely successful solo career). But the first major Colombian group was *Fruko y sus Tesos*, founded by Ernesto 'Fruko' Estrada (formerly of Los Corraleros) founded in 1971. The song "El preso" by Alvaro Velásquez performed by

*Fruko y sus Tesos* was a hit for a long time in Colombia, becoming a “classic” of Colombian salsa. Colombian salsa takes the form of a variety of a “sauce” with many local “flavors,” inspired by rhythms of the Pacific Coast (*currulao*) and the Atlantic Coast (*cumbia*). For quite some time, Colombian salsa remains a decidedly regional and marginal phenomenon, with little national resonance and distribution, thus distinguishing itself significantly, in both style and form, from *música costeña* and *música del interior*.

Despite *salsa*’s growing popularity and the advent of new, imported genres, like Dominican *merengue*, commercial *cumbia* enjoyed substantial acceptance abroad throughout the 1980s, thanks to the success of songs like “*La Colegiala*” (The Schoolgirl), by Rodolfo y su Típica.<sup>xxviii</sup> The song became a hit in Europe as it was used as jingle for a coffee commercial. Actually, this song is not even considered a *cumbia* by most coastal musicians, but rather is considered contemptuously as *chucu-chucu*, a pejorative, onomatopoeic term describing the kind of simplified and repetitive version of *cumbia* embraced by Colombia’s recording industry studios after the 1970s, also described as *música gallega*.<sup>xxix</sup>

In the 1990s, *cumbia* was summarily included in the marketing of world music, awakening interest from British recording labels of world music such as World Circuit, Mango Records (a division of Island Records), World Music Network and Globe Style releasing compilations of ‘old fashion’ cumbias coming from Colombian labels Sonolux and Discos Fuentes. In 1982, in Stockholm, during the ceremony for the Nobel Prize for literature, Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez introduced Colombian singer Sonia Bazanta, otherwise known as “Totó La Momposina”, from a family of singers and musicians from the village of Talaigua, a small riverside town in Magdalena (and old *palenque* of fugitive slaves), to a worldwide audience. Since

then, Totó La Momposina has become a staple of the global circuit of world music, participating in WOMAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance), the travelling festival of ethnic music from all over the world. This was an idea by Peter Gabriel in 1991 who also successfully recorded albums like *La candela viva* (The Burning Fire) by Totó La Momposina for the label Real World in 1992. As the new emblem of traditional *cumbia*, Totó La Momposina has never altered her style nor her traditional *costeño* repertoire to please the global market. Additionally, she has seldom strayed far from her roots (with the exception of some phases in her artistic career when she composed and interpreted some pieces inspired by the Cuban *son*), replicating coastal and river music tradition in the finest way available.

In 2007, an unexpected and surprising event took place. The Gaiteros of San Jacinto, one of the most representative group of traditional *cumbia*, won a Latin Grammy. Their album *Un fuego de sangre pura* (A Pure-Blooded Fire), co-produced by Colombian recording artist Iván Benavides for the Smithsonian Folkways label, was awarded the prize for best folklore recording, celebrating the spirit of more conventional, unadulterated *costeño* music, the potential of a return to grassroots, or, as many Costeños would claim, “to our very tradition.”

## Conclusion

*Cumbia* is the most representative musical form of *costeño* traditional culture of the Colombian Atlantic Coast as the cultural product of the afro-indo-hispanic *mestizaje*, although the African component is the most relevant. *Cumbia* has its origin in the rural villages in the Magdalena river valley, within the zone called the Mompos Depression, originally as an instrumental form only, played by the *conjunto de*

*cañamillero*.

From the postwar period, *cumbia* started its popularization, in its stylized and orchestrated form in conformity with cosmopolitan taste, through national and transnational channels of diffusion (e.g. radio and records).

Big-band adaptations of composed and orchestrated *cumbias* in the 1940s and 1950s contributed to the processes of popularizing the sound which became familiar as the new national music of Colombia, but at the same time redefined its social and cultural connotations with the erasure of blackness or Africanness. The process of “modernization” and commercialization induced by the national record market brought to its diffusion at the national level as *música tropical*, an urban orchestrated form with the elimination of Afro-Colombian traditional musical instruments. To gain the acceptance of the Andean white and *mestizo* middle class, *cumbia* left behind its own regional connotations and acquired unofficially the status of Colombian national music.<sup>xxx</sup>

Fundamental to this process of commercialization or “modernization” and affirmation in the national and transnational market are the role of Colombian record companies (Discos Fuentes, Discos Tropical, Sonolux). In the 1960s, *cumbia* was disseminated as *música tropical* in other Latin American countries (Mexico, Peru, Argentina, and Chile) through small groups made up of a wind section, a rhythm section, and an accordion set. In the 1970s and 1980s, *cumbia* had to confront the arrival of other music genres, *vallenato* and *salsa*, mixing with them in some cases. In the 1990s, *cumbia* in its different forms, experienced a revival thanks to the boom of *world music*, spreading in the global musical market.

*Cumbia*, from being a regional music genre with strong ethnic-social connotations,

being a musical expression of a local *costeño* identity, acquired the status of national music, transcending local culture and becoming the “marker” of Colombian national identity. In a few years, through a process of appropriation, reinterpretation, and commercialization, *cumbia* became a Latin American transnational style.

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#### NOTES

<sup>ii</sup> The Atlantic Coast of Colombia extends from the Guajira Peninsula in the northeastern portion of the country to the Gulf of Urabá in the northwest, near the Panama border, and, is made up of the departments of Guajira, Magdalena, Cesar, Atlántico, Bolívar, Córdoba, and Sucre, as well as portions of northern Antioquia (Urabá) and the northern arm of Chocó. The lower coastal and river plains are inhabited by Afro-Hispanic (*mulatos*), Indo-Hispanic (*mestizos*), and Indo-African (*zambos*) populations. The indigenous Kogi and Ika are located in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, in the department of Magdalena, and the Wayúu are settled in the Guajira Peninsula.

<sup>ii</sup> In the last decades, the process of cultural mixing in the Colombian Caribbean coast and islands has been enriched by contributions from Middle Eastern immigrants (Syrian-Lebanese), called “turcos,” or the Turkish.

<sup>iii</sup> Manuel and Delia Zapata Olivella carried out the first notable recordings and investigations of ethno-folkloric interest regarding Caribbean coastal music in the 1960s (M. Zapata 1967; D. Zapata 1962; 1967). Before that, in 1959, the ethnomusicologist Isabel Artez, together with folklorist Delia Zapata, started a campaign of fieldworks in coastal towns such as Palenque de San Basilio, Soplaviento, María La Baja, and San Jacinto (Artez 1991). They were followed in 1964 by the investigations of the American ethnomusicologist George List, who did fieldwork in the town of Evitar (Bolívar) with the collaboration of Delia Zapata. This work brought about the publication of *Music and Poetry in a Colombian Village: A Tricultural Heritage* (1983). The ethnographical studies of Aquiles Escalante (1954; 1964) marks the beginning of the interest in Afro-descendants culture in Colombia. One of the most interesting audio-visual source material for the ethnomusicological research has been the documentaries of the series Yuruparí, – including “Cumbia sobre el río” (1986) - produced by COLCULTURA (Colombian Institute of Culture) in the 1980s, and directed by the anthropologist Gloria Triana. In the years that follow, even though there is still a demological character that remains in the study of ethnic music (Abadía 1977; Marulanda 1984; Ocampo López 1976), an anthropological and sociological approach is now emerging (Bermúdez 1985; Wade 1997; 1998; 2000).

<sup>iv</sup> In Palenque de San Basilio the *lumbalú* is still performed; it is a funeral ritual of the descendants of the *cimarrones* (fugitive slaves) that make up ancient *palenques* (Escalante 1954; 1964; 1979; 1989).

<sup>v</sup> The term “*tambora*” has different meanings, but they all relate to one another: a) *tambora* is the low cylindrical drum with two heads; b) *tambora* is the rhythm (“*golpe*”) played on this drum (characterized by a ternary rhythm on a double meter); c) *tambora* is the ensemble including voices and percussions (including the *tambora*); d) *tambora* is the dance associated to this music; e) *tambora* is the festive occasion with dances and songs performed by the *tambora* (Carbó R. 2003:63).

<sup>vi</sup> The term *currulao* also indicates a genre of music and dance from the Afro-Colombian people from Colombia’s South Pacific coast, performed by a *marimba* ensemble.

<sup>vii</sup> The Colombian *bailes cantados* present some similarities at the formal and stylistic level (above all in the type of call-and-response songs that are accompanied by the drums) with other dance-music expressions broadcast in the Caribbean Afro-Hispanic areas, like the *rumba* in Cuba, the *baile de bomba* in Puerto Rico, and the *baile de los palos* in the Dominican Republic. Petrona Martínez, belonging to a family of *cantadoras*, is the most representative singer of *bullerengue* (and in general of the *bailes cantados* repertoire) and in the last years has performed in many festivals in Europe, Asia and North Africa.

<sup>viii</sup> In Colombia, the *palenques* were numerous and very spread out, above all in the outskirts of Cartagena and Mompos, on the river banks of the Cauca and San Jorge, in the Cauca valley, in the mountainous region of Antioquia and in the Chocó, on the Pacific Coast, in the middle Magdalena up to the east in the Llanos (grasslands). The most famous *palenque*, which for the longest time was able to fight off the Spaniards, was Palenque de San Basilio.

<sup>ix</sup> Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, in the book *La población negra de México* (1946), attributes the name of

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*Cumbás* to the ethnic group *Cumba-manéz* from the former Mali Empire: “in the second half of the 16th century black tribes such as the *Cumbás* and the *Zapés* were brought to Nueva España, and in general to America. These groups never appear again in the slave lists in the centuries to come” (Aguirre [1946] 1989: 119)

<sup>x</sup> In Brazil, the *cucumbis*, singled out during the 19th century in Bahía and in Río, were dramatic dances performed at the Christmas festivals and Carnival, which represent the clash between the black and Indian cultures; and, according to Oneyda Alvarenga (1947), it was also the regional Brazilian name for the black populations from the Congo.

<sup>xi</sup> See Enrique Luis Muñoz Vélez’ “La cumbia: trazos y signos de una historia cultural,” available at <[www.musicalafrolatino.com/pagina\\_nueva\\_22j.htm](http://www.musicalafrolatino.com/pagina_nueva_22j.htm)>.

<sup>xii</sup> This confirms the thesis regarding the African origin of the instrument, the fact that millet is originally from an Asian graminaceous plant that spread out to Africa, Europe, and successively to America, with the arrival of Europeans, which excludes the use of *milho* in the Pre-Columbian era.

<sup>xiii</sup> The term refers to its function: “to make happy” or “to improvise”, “to vary”.

<sup>xiv</sup> The term means “caller”. The function of a “call” by the drums is also recurrent in other Afro-American music traditions, such as the Afro-Uruguayan *candombe*, Honduran *punta*, and the Cuban *rumba*.

<sup>xv</sup> The Carabalí are Afro-Cubans of Efik/Ibibio origin, an ethnic group that inhabits the Calabar region in the southeastern part of Nigeria and uses the same drums called *ekomo* (Akpabot 1975).

<sup>xvi</sup> In his monograph *Music and Poetry in a Colombian Village*, List calls it “*bombo*”, a generic Spanish term that identifies the bass drum with two drumheads and is used today on the Pacific Coast to refer to drums of this types.

<sup>xvii</sup> The traditional genre performed by this group is the *gaita*, but in groups of *gaiteros*, the *cumbia*, the *porro*, and the *puya* also appear in their repertoire.

<sup>xviii</sup> The Colombian *gaita* has no relationship to the Iberian *gaita*, a term that in Spanish and Portuguese means ‘bagpipe’.

<sup>xix</sup> In the town of San Pelayo (Córdoba) one finds the *gaita corta* (called *pito cabeza de cera* in slang) that is distinguished by its dimensions from the *gaitas largas*. In addition, the *gaita corta* is played alone, not in pairs, as are the *gaitas largas* (Cantero-Fortich 1991: 120).

<sup>xx</sup> There is also a process of “Cubanization” of the Colombian repertoire on behalf of Cuban orchestras, as is the case with the *porro* “La múcura” (The Vase), by Crescencio Salcedo and reinterpreted by Pérez Prado, or of the *bambuco* “Bésame morenita” (Kiss me, little dark one), by Pedro Fernández and popularized by the group Sonora Matancera (Betancur 1993).

<sup>xxi</sup> In some coastal cities during the 1940s, some “sextet” groups appear that are imitations of Cuban groups, in particular the Sexteto Habanero, which formed in Cuba during the 1920s with the repertoire of *son*. The typical formation of the Cuban *sexteto* was: guitar, *tres*, *bongo*, *maracas*, *claves* and *marímbula* (later replaced by the double bass), while the Colombian *sexteto*, -the Sexteto Tabalá of Palenque de San Basilio, the only one remaining in Colombia - includes *tambor alegre*, *timbal* (the same bongo), *maracas*, *claves*, and *marímbula*, with a repertoire of *son palenqueros*.

<sup>xxii</sup> Some landmark songs include Bermúdez’s “Carmen de Bolívar”, “Salsipuedes”, “Tolu”, “San Fernando”, “Colombia, tierra querida”, and Galán’s “Ay cosita linda” and “El merecumbé”.

<sup>xxiii</sup> The *porro* is the slow version of the *cumbia*, with the same rhythm of the “backbeat” of the cymbal—the stress of the simple two-four—that will be taken up by orchestras, played on a cymbal with a drumstick, and muffled with a hand.

<sup>xxiv</sup> The term *papayera* has its origin in the typical musical apprenticeship of a *banda de hojitas*, accomplished by players who use papaya leaves vibrating between the lips, and for this reason it gets the name *papayera* (Fals Borda, 1986:127).

<sup>xxv</sup> The most acclaimed composers and interpreters of coastal music, such as Lucho Bermúdez, Pacho Galán, and Escalona, have recorded for Sonolux. Today, this Medellín label continues promoting new Colombian talents.

<sup>xxvi</sup> See the L.P. “San Fernando y otros éxitos inolvidables de Lucho Bermúdez y Matilde Díaz” (Sonolux LP 12-267).

<sup>xxvii</sup> Rafael Escalona (1907-2009) was the most celebrated composer of classic *vallenatos* songs of the 1940s and 1950s.

<sup>xxviii</sup> This group was established in the 1970s by coastal singer Rodolfo Aicardi (1946-2007).

<sup>xxix</sup> This is an onomatopoeic term referring to the simple and commercial imitation of coastal music, very common in the 1970s. Another slang term with the same meaning is “*musica gallega*” (lit. “music from Galicia”).

<sup>xxx</sup> Even though officially *bambuco*, a music expression from Andean *mestizo* culture, represents the

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musical emblem of the Colombian national identity (Wade 1998, 2000).

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