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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
SANTA CRUZ

**TRANSCENDENCE AND *SON JAROCHO*  
AS PRACTICED IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

MUSIC

by

**Robin Sacolick**

June 2016

The dissertation of Robin Sacolick is approved:

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Tyrus Miller  
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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June 2016

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## Abstract

### Transcendence and *Son Jarocho* as Practiced in the San Francisco Bay Area

Robin Sacolick

People of emerging or non-dominant ethnicities in multicultural, diasporic societies find ways to establish identities, merge strengths, and transcend difficulties. This study explores such a way: community practice in the Bay Area of *son jarocho*, a centuries-old genre of Mexican music, dance and poetry. While the participants' project revives folklore, it also offers experiences in processes of transcendence that help overcome the challenges of Western modernity. Materially, participants transcend cultural barriers or gender expectations. Epistemologically, traditional arts and values provide respite from capital's demands. Affectively, ritual performativity potentiates joy, identity transformation, and more. Given the energy that participants seem to reap from the practices, this study investigated three questions and related hypotheses:

--What empowers this genre to transcend centuries, borders, and even disuse, to become popular again? Perhaps today's *sonera/os* face issues of multiculturalism paralleling those confronted by *son jarocho*'s original creators, issues that led to imbuing *son jarocho* with subversive, syncretic, or timeless modes of transcendence. Chapters 3 and 4 track processes that support this hypothesis.

--Are transcendent experiences attributable to the music and/or the surrounding practices? Chapters 4 and 5 gather scientific research, testimonials, and



critical theory that suggest that aspects of both music and the practices evoke affects that some call “magical.”

--How do community practices influence *son jarocho*? Chapters 4, 5 and 6 examine how context nuances musical structure, affect, and meaning. This reveals benefits (and a few challenges) of tradition and community.

The methodology here regards the words of community members as paramount, framed by writings of Chicana feminists and scholars from African, Mesoamerican and Spanish cultures.

The *son jarocho* community of the Bay Area has had some unique boons not found in some other *jaranera/o* scenes. The artistic and ethical guidance of Mexican master Artemio Posadas, and the fandango that has been offered by Jorge and Lourdes Beltrán some 100 times, have provided uniquely grounded sites in which to learn, and deeply experience, the practices. These individuals have, for years, patiently promulgated indigenous values, community, and womens’ artistic potential, yielding traditions that are especially conducive to transcendent outcomes.

**A word to readers:** Aspects of this document serve academic requirements more than they serve core messages. Chapter 2 is a required literature review that defines contested terms; those more interested in the community may wish to skip it. Chapter 3 researches the musical history of *son jarocho*, much of which *jaranera/os* already know, but it does offer new analyses. Chapter 4, especially the discussion of atemporal contour, may intrigue those who have had exceptional experiences in fandango. Chapter 5 is the heart, where community members speak.

## Acknowledgments and Dedication

This project emerged based on a combination of love of *son jarocho* and experiences as a *gringa* mother of children with Mayan heritage. It was the result of seeking to learn about traditional ritual Mesoamerican music, and music in practice today by women. These criteria stemmed from the embodied imperatives of motherhood, which inhere even in adoptive situations. As a result of the steeping in *son* that this project has enabled, I have profound awe of the genre.

My great good fortune was to have been introduced to *son jarocho* and *son huasteco* decades back by Francisco González. From that time, the secrets of how these genres invoke energy have intrigued me. Yet, while learning about *son jarocho* and its community in the Bay Area, I have become more aware of how very problematic it is to write about a genre that originated in cultures that were not mine at birth. However, I have met other non-Latina/os and mixed-Latina/os who have found ways to resolve paradoxes within their own identities through the welcoming and practices of the *son* community. Moreover, I have been advised by Chicana/o scholars to simply document my experiences as they occur.

My greatest thanks go out to Maestro Artemio Posadas, and the artists and community members interviewed herein. The lifelong efforts of Maestro have instilled in the community a value system in which the efforts of these artists could thrive. His respect for the Huastec/Tenek people has also resonated deeply due to my children's Mayan heritage.

The support of my husband, Bryan Butler has been the rock upon which this work has been built. The friendship of los Beltrán, Mariva and Angelica have been the nectar that has fueled its continuance. The inspiration of Francisco González was the project's very conception. The wisdom, encouragement and patience of Karlton Hester have been the road to fruition. The guiding suggestions of Janet Sturman and Dard Neuman have been its salvation. The reading by my mother, Janet Gregory Kunert Christman, has completed all its circuits; I am pleased to be able to finish a degree that she all but finished but had to relinquish due to gender role expectations. The obstacles confected by my sons, William Luis and Jerome Armando, are only exceeded by the love they instilled that sparked the drive to do this work, and thus it is dedicated to them.

Still, nothing would have been possible but for *la comunidad de la Bahía*: their welcoming, talent, and dedication. Thank you Isidro, Vicky, Luis, Margarita, Ever, Gaby, Maricarmen, Antv, Lolís, Francisco, Carmen, Rudy, Flora, Clemente, Claudia, Don Trino, Jessica, Stuyvie, Doña Coti, Hector, Catherine, Raul, Junko, Ramon, Julia, Akat, Emmeline, Pablo, Angelica, Angel, Mónica, Stuyvie, Sharon, Alan, Tanya, Chris, Noelle, Alejandro, Mae, Johnnie, Leticia, German, Doña Leti, Julia, Tomás, Kyla, Devon, Liz, Darcy, María, Maestro, Cassandra, Jorge, Michelle, Russell, Nydia, Humberto, Lourdes, Tomás...and many others whose names I apologize for overlooking and/or look forward to learning!

Fig. 1 Map 1. Veracruz



This map depicts important sites such as Veracruz the port, Xalapa the capital, Coatzacoalcos of the Olmec region bordering “Mayan Riviera,” Santiago Tuxtla and Catemaco, Tlacotalpan and Alvarado sometimes considered the cradle of *son jarocho*, Mandinga and Yanga both evincing African origin, the ancient Totonac pyramids at Zempoala and the Totonac/Huastec pyramids at El Tajin.

**Fig. 2. Map 2. Conceptual map of locations of indigenous groups in Mesoamerica**  
Locations depicted are relative, not absolute.



Fig. 3. Map 3. San Francisco Bay Area



## Chapter I. Introduction

The first time my friend attended a *son jarocho* fandango (community practice of *son jarocho*), her friends told her “You're gonna get addicted.” Another talks about why she participates, saying “It’s my medicine.” David Hidalgo remembers that the first time East L.A. band Los Lobos performed *son jarocho* (Veracruzian genre of music, dance and poetry), the audience was so excited that he asked himself, “What *is* this?” (Loza 189). In his dissertation, Daniel Sheehy, director at Smithsonian Folkways Records, refers to the *jarocho* fandango as a “peak experience of social interaction” (7). Martha González describes “leaving her soul” on the dance platform as a woman’s “cathartic or spiritual experience while dancing ... in *fandango*” (“Sonic” 59).

Like González—mother, touring musician and author who won a Grammy the same year she finished her Ph.D. and started a tenure-track position—*jaranera/os* (*son jarocho* practitioners) in the Bay Area are difficult to schedule for interviews. They are busy organizing workshops and concerts, working or teaching, directing plays, performing in other traditions, playing *son jarocho* for charity, hosting visiting *maestra/os* (teachers), raising and mentoring children, traveling to Veracruz and concert sites, mounting fandangos, and generally multitasking. For special gigs, they may drive all night and return the next day. Some travel fifty miles or more to attend a monthly fandango where they dance, sing, strum, eat, drink and chat much of the night, before journeying another hour or more home. They seem tireless.

Is there a relationship between practice of *son jarocho* and such endurance? Are the catharsis, the medicine, the peak experience attributable to the music, or to the surrounding practices? Is *son jarocho* separable from its community manifestations, or does it become something else in isolation? What about this genre has enabled it to transcend the social needs of multiple centuries and countries, and enjoy adoption by many communities today, even after having fallen into periods of disuse?

This study addresses these questions by exploring the genre's origins in sixteenth century New Spain (Mexico), tracing its links to techniques of transcendence, and querying today's Bay Area practitioners about their experiences. It documents how this community's *son jarocho* practice is grounded in ethics of inclusivity, women's worth, and social activism, infused by leaders from Mexico and their respect for indigenous culture. For some, the genre serves as a mode of transcendence of a variety of mundane limits. For many, continued inspiration relies on participation in community efforts. The genre's inception among people of diversity concerned with transcending adversity, befits its efficacy in the diverse Bay Area of today.

A visit to a Bay Area fandango, a communal occasion in which *son jarocho* is celebrated according to certain ritual norms, initiates the explorations herein.

### **I. A. At a Bay Area fandango**

It was a mild January evening, and my family was on the way to our first fandango. After driving about twenty-five minutes and navigating a maze of suburban



roads, we reached a home where the garage had been painted with colorful murals of pirate ships at sea. A group of maybe ten people was tuning up small *jaranas* (strummed string instruments) and chatting in Spanish. The hostess, who we had never met, asked how we had heard about the event. Someone from the community had told us the address. We felt a bit awkward, especially because my husband and I look European. However, our Latino children immediately found other children and began to play as if they had known each other all their lives. No one else took obvious notice of us, and the group began to grow to what would become over thirty participants of many ages, genders and ethnicities. As people arrived, they greeted each of the attendees in turn.

The sound of strummed strings began to permeate the air. The opening *son* was “El Siquisirí,” which traditionally begins fandangos by beckoning attendees and blessing the occasion. It lasted perhaps half an hour, as participants continued to arrive and the hypnotic effects of repetitions of verses and loud percussion from the *zapateado* (foot-stomping) dance took hold.

The musicians, men and women, old and young, stood in a circle as they played their guitar-like *jaranas*. They surrounded a low, wooden dance platform called the *tarima* in the center. Each *son*'s music, poetry and dance lasted from ten to forty-five minutes, depending on the level of enthusiasm of the participants.

The garage heated up quickly from the intense activity, and refreshment breaks came between the selections played. Sumptuous food and drink were available at tables behind the circle. People helped themselves and chatted about family and

friends, upcoming performances, or recent travel, over a background of laughter and instruments being tuned. After five to ten minutes, a leader would initiate the next *son* by plucking its syncopated opening melody.

Some selections were danced by only pairs of women (*sones de montón*), others only by mixed couples (*de pareja*), all on the *tarima*. Perhaps eight or nine inches in height, this dance platform was about six by eight feet in area. The resonating holes in its sides helped to produce a voluminous baritone when the dancers stomped their *zapateado* percussion lines.

There was no pressure to dance, and some attendees simply sat in chairs surrounding the circle of performers, bearing witness and steeping in the sensorium of sights and sounds. However, most played *jarana*, sang, and/or took turns dancing. *Jaranera/os* hung their instruments over their shoulders, by the straps, when ascending the *tarima*. They had to wait for instrumental passages between sung verses before relieving a dancer with a light tap on the back. Sometimes a dancer subtly sought a partner with eye contact or a brief nod across the room. Often, dancers relieved each other within a few verses. If this did not happen after a long spell, though, those on the *tarima* had to maintain their elegant postures even as their cheeks flushed and perspiration flowed. Sometimes they inspired improvised lyrics from the singers, or humor emanated from the *tarima* through comic body movements. During sung verses, dancers performed *mudanzas*, silent steps enabling lyrics to be heard--and *zapateadists* to rest. During instrumental passages, however, *zapateado* rhythms resounded.

After watching for a while, I was eager to dance, but hesitant due to my inexperience. A young woman solved this by inviting me, which felt welcoming. I found that unusual concentration and precision is necessary when dancing an actual percussion line, and the steps were more rigorous than they appeared. There would be other norms to learn “the hard way” on the *tarima*. Still, that night, I had fun, even knowing that I must have made a bit of a spectacle in my naivety. It was all part of the process.

Many participants wore traditional dress, especially the *maestra/os*. For men this meant white brimmed hats, boots or dress shoes with hard heels, and, sometimes, red bandanas. The women wore long full skirts, cotton lace petticoats, colorful *rebozos* (shawls), and stacked-heeled shoes for sounding the percussion. Some of the clothes doubled as props in customary dance moves: shawls in “La Manta” (the blanket) and hats in “El Ahualulco” (confluence of rivers). Other attendees wore leggings, short dresses, fashion boots, sneakers and even goth trappings.

I did not notice smoking. Many enjoyed a glass of wine, a beer, or a sip of tequila, but not to the point of intoxication. Rich alcoholic drinks from Veracruz called *toritos* were a treat that night, as were delicious Veracruz-style tostadas warmed on a backyard grill. Rice, beans, tortillas, salsas, salads, fruit and desserts completed the fare.

The participants played several *sones* over a few hours, until the traditional climactic “La Bamba” sounded at about eleven, the point when attendance was greatest.<sup>1</sup>

A little after midnight, the *sones de madrugada* (early morning), slower ballads that explore deeper and more intimate emotions, began. Musicians who had been standing for hours started to sit in the chairs surrounding the circle. They played and sang with reflection, sentimentality, or exhausted release on their faces. This lasted well past two a.m. The party had lasted seven or eight hours, at least for those who had not arrived late or left early.

As we drove home, my family talked about our experiences. The adults, who had had no idea what to expect seven hours ago, were awestruck by the artistry, the music, the welcoming, the overall vitality and euphoria. The children wanted to know when we could go again.

While every *jarocho* fandango has individual qualities, the one described above had structural, normative and affective characteristics in common with others I have attended in Southern California, San Francisco, the East Bay, and Veracruz. For example, participants come from near and far, during both happy and troubling times of their lives, representing various cultures and age groups; these differences begin to melt soon after arrival. Strangers become friends. Attendees share conversation, music, dance and food, temporarily relinquishing external concerns. They are able to

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<sup>1</sup> Several fandangos later it would become clear that certain *sones* were almost always heard, although not in any particular order—“Colas,” “La morena,” “El ahualulco” and “El pájaro cu.” Also heard often are “La Guacamaya,” “Balajú,” and “El Buscapiés,” which serves a climactic function similar to “La Bamba.” Less frequently heard, but still favorites in the Bay Area, are “La Manta,” “La Iguana,” and “El Cascabel.” Many others are played from time to time.

select activities that suit their individual inclinations. When they wish to dance or sing, they do. When they prefer to listen, chat or eat, they do.

Those who play the *jarana* may strum for hours. Their body movements, breath, and ears entrain with other *jaranera/os*’, intensifying commonality of experience. Several of my informants note an uncanny ability to perform much longer, when standing in the circle of musicians at a fandango or atop the *tarima*, than they could if they were by themselves. Perhaps this is in part because their attention shifts from the pain of repetitive movement to the euphoria of dissolving interpersonal borders through shared experience and collaborative creative activity. As the number of fandangos I’ve attended increases, so does the enjoyment of recognizing friends, improving artistically, and finding a site for my ethnically mixed family. The ambiance is conducive to learning, due to peoples’ general helpfulness and to the ability for many musicians playing at once to cover my novice’s mistakes. By the end of a twenty-minute *son*, a smile shared with a virtuoso standing nearby genuinely celebrates a mutual experience, independent of judgments.

Of course, the music contributes immensely to fandangos’ affective atmosphere. The constant sound of plucked strings and repetitive, familiar verse-chorus forms provide a soothing, even hypnotic, support, like a heartbeat or a waterfall. The lyrics contribute consolations and revelations, as do any classic poetry and improvised verse. The heat of exertion releases endorphins and neutralizes stress, as well. The atmosphere is warm, both physically and psychologically. Elation and euphoria often ensue.

Some of these attributes of fandangos have been associated with rituals in other contexts. Some have been associated with magic. Veracruzian maestro Andrés Flores observed during a 2013 Bay Area workshop, “The magic of *son jarocho* comes from dancing, singing and playing simultaneously.” He later added, “It has always been a music of resistance.” This is also common to many rituals, as will be explored in the following chapters. Rituals, magic and resistance, in turn, are all sometimes associated with transcendence.

### **I. B. What is at stake in each chapter**

In considering relationships between *son jarocho*'s community focus, ritual aspects, and affects (subjective results), the need for working definitions arises. Connotations of the concept of ritual, for example, diverge widely. When juxtaposed with those of religiosity, secularism, and magic, they form a recursive maze. Chapter 2 distills definitions while reviewing the academic literature and methodologies of this study. The discussion of “ritual” draws upon considerations of form and function by Talal Asad, Jack Goody and Kristina Wirtz, and models of process proposed by Victor Turner and others. Observations by Carlos Chávez and Goody frame “magic;” “religiosity” derives in contrast. “Affect” refers both to subjective emotional or mental states, and to observable manifestations of subjective experiences. Most of these terms, along with others covered in the chapter, have multiple meanings. Thus, the intentions of those who use them are most preferred.

*Son jarocho*'s unexpected social and affective impact today relates to its origins in diversity within the adversity of colonialism, and the techniques of

transcendence thus informing it. Chapter 3 counters narratives that have marginalized African and Native American influences on the genre. It examines context and traditions from the component cultures of the *jarocho* people—West African, Mesoamerican, Spanish, etc.—locating new data that demonstrate how features of the customs transferred into the Mexican genre. This follows advice of Kwabena Nketia and Álvaro Ochoa Serrano that the search for musical origins in societies where music is inseparable from other activities (such as many in Mesoamerica and Africa) must encompass all relevant aspects of the constituent cultures. Archival data combines with new analyses to add new dimensions to the evidence in favor of African and Mesoamerican influence.

To explain how these origins translate into *son jarocho*'s efficacy today, chapter 4 visits its intersections with ritual. Fandangos are secularized community rituals based on the genre. More religious customs, such as La Rama, feature *son jarocho* as a central activity. Still others—baptisms, Día de los Muertos, weddings—optionally include *jarocho* performances. Traditional renderings of individual *sones* also evince ritual techniques that produce transcendent outcomes. For example, aleatoric procedures transcend preconceived linear ordering of verses in fandango settings, and the duration of a selection depends upon the participants who improvise new lyrics or offer any of a number of ancient ones as inspired in given moments, while the chord progression repeats without a fixed endpoint. This can produce a sense of timelessness that permits not just affective, but material transcendence:

For the future to bring hope and change, the now needs to be reconceptualized...(we) challenge the conception of time as a linear *chronos*

determined by the logic of cause and effect...The 'queering' of time consists of disturbing chronological order, conceptualizing the present as always already interplaying with the past and charged with responsibility for the future...(Sroda, et al. 119).

Some of the other ritual techniques employed include coded language, performativity, and universal participation, which promote, respectively, transcendent resistance to oppression, identity transformation, and community solidarity—survival skills for diverse peoples facing adversity.

Chapter 5 gets to the ethnographic source for all the other chapters: the direct words of participants in the Bay Area *jaranera/o* community. Seven interviews document experiences of women who embody new gender roles by organizing, teaching, and performing. They further community through preserving tradition and supporting political and humanitarian causes. Two interviews reveal the words of men who have been invaluable in forming, growing and teaching the Bay Area community. Two more are from men outside the community who have greatly supported *son jarocho*'s migration to the U.S. Two boons emerge that distinguish the Bay Area community from others: the unique, zen-like value set passed along by Maestro Artemio Posadas, and the longstanding offering of a monthly fandango by the Beltráns. Moreover, each participant's contributions and presence is crucial, so I offer two-to-three-line sketches of about sixty community members, attempting to approximate a portrait of the whole.

Chapter 6 considers ethical dynamics that arise from Bay Area practices. Categories of issues include inclusivity, feminization, activism and transcendence.



Inclusivity applies to embracing people of all kinds, but also manifests creatively in genres beyond *jarocho* and improvisation. These matters spawn lively discussions.

Feminism takes on new meanings through the lens of theorists such as Chela Sandoval and Sonia Saldivar, who see the Chicana feminist agenda as inseparable from overall Chicana/o issues, and those of all persons of color. The strategies they suggest to produce transcendence are in themselves transcendent, and include music.

Activism among Bay Area *jaranera/os* spans both the political and the humanitarian. It also reaches both outward and inward, asking, for example, whether the cultural appropriation risks of professionalism outweigh the chance to reach new beneficiaries, and how it should be prioritized against community and philanthropy. Similarly, the relative merits of protecting tradition versus embracing change in the practice of *son jarocho* is a multi-faceted and ongoing debate.

Transcendence emerges as an ethic throughout. Participants transcend such debates and issues through community practices. Chicana feminist perspectives transcend antiquated notions of feminism as well as outdated gender roles. The ethic of inclusivity and its challenges mean transcending limiting social and artistic constructs—borders, hegemonic ideas of progress or success, who sings or plays. The activity levels of many *jaranera/os* transcend the drudgery of Western life under the pressures of capital, as do their peak experiences when doing the practices. *Sones* follow a contour that transcends linear concepts of time. Perhaps that is a natural consequence of a genre that was born of diversity experiencing adversity, seeking to transcend just such concepts. How this happens, follows.

## **Chapter II. Transcending the literature review with working definitions**

The literature in which this study is grounded helps to derive working definitions for contested terms that arise when exploring of *son jarocho* and its affects. These terms, such as “ritual,” “magic,” “religiosity,” and “component cultures,” have special significance in relation to this genre, as well as to the methodology used in interpreting this research, as discussed below.

### **II. A. *Son jarocho* as art and as ritual**

A definition of *son jarocho* based on its surface form might resemble Wikipedia’s “a regional folk music style of Mexican Son from Veracruz,” noting that it involves dance and poetry. Intersections of the genre’s practices and aspects of ritual, however, are many. For example, the *jarocho* fandango is a secularized ritual centered upon *son jarocho*, elaborated in Antonio García de León’s 2006 *Fandango: El ritual del mundo jarocho a través de los siglos*. More explicitly religious rituals of *jarocho* people or *jaranera/os*, such as baptisms and weddings, may not center upon practice of *son*, but often feature its performance. The rendering of the *sones* also involves ritual procedures, such as call-and-response singing or preconceived choreographies, melodies and lyrics interspersed with spontaneous ones.

The literature that discusses ritual aspects of the genre includes García de León’s *Fandango: El Ritual*, Alfredo Delgado Calderón’s *Historia, Identidad y Cultura en el Sotavento*, 2004, and Daniel Sheehy’s 1979 dissertation *The Son Jarocho*. Of interest is Álvaro Ochoa Serrano’s 1992 *Mitote, Fandango y*

*Mariacheros*, which traces origins of the generic fandango to the pre-conquest *mitote* (Native Mesoamerican dance ritual.)

## II. B. Component cultures

Anita González' 2004 *Jarocho's Soul: Cultural Identity and Afro-Mexican Dance* focuses on a *son* practice that intersects both art and ritual: performance and performativity in folkloric renderings. In her 2010 *Afro-Mexico: Dancing Between Myth and Reality* she further explores the Afro-Mexican influences on the genre. In both, she proposes the establishment of identity as a function of these performances; this is also the function of some rituals.

However, the matter of exactly which component cultures produced the amalgam of *son jarocho* has been contested. As in the U.S., Mexican history includes periods in which the active influence of African and Native American cultures was absent from the dominant narrative. The result is that even today, scholars such as Randall Kohl in his *Escritos de un naufrago habitual* have called for more conclusive evidence of African (and Native American) contributions to *son jarocho* (67-8). Help can be found in González' works. Rolando A. Pérez Fernández' *Musica Afromestiza Mexicana* offers musical analyses that bear evidence of African idioms in *son jarocho*, as does his "El *son jarocho* como expresión musical afromestiza" (39-56). Micaela Díaz-Sánchez and Alexandro D. Hernández gather various written and oral histories in support of the African influence in their article "The *Son Jarocho* as Afro-Mexican Resistance Music." Works by Kwabena Nketia and Karlton Hester remind us of the importance of consulting contextual cues when seeking evidence of African

influences. Eric Charry provides data about African stringed instruments that suggest additional influences.

The case for the contributions of Native Americans to the genre comes from dance scholars such as Veracruzana Maestra Rubí Oseguera Rueda, through her 2014 Bay Area workshops and personal communications. Other sources include classics of investigation and re-imagination of pre-conquest music by Robert Stevenson and Gertrude Kurath and José Martí, as well as more recent offerings such as Roberto Lopez Moreno's *Crónica de la Música de México*. Marina Alonso Bolaños protests *La "Invención" de la Música Indígena de México* as it took place during the twentieth century, including but not limited to somewhat speculative works such as Luis Antonio Gómez' *El libro de música mexicana a través de los Cantares Mexicanos*, reminding us that embracing plural possibilities as to interpretation of ancient customs remains wise. Carlos Chávez' *Mexican Music*, suggests that collateral sources such as surviving neighboring cultures may hold cues to indigenous practices about which less is known (such as those of the Sotavento.)<sup>2</sup>

Spanish and European contributions to the genre have not been challenged in the scholarship, but neither have they been musicologically analyzed. To assist with this, another Stevenson classic, *Spanish Music in the Age of Columbus* as well as Thomas Stanford's *El Villancico y el Corrido Mexicano* are useful, as is Paul Laird's *Towards a History of the Spanish Villancico*, Julian Ribera's *Music in Ancient Arabia*

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<sup>2</sup> In that regard, I have attended *danzas* of the indigenous Yaqui cultures of Northwest Mexico, now resident in Tucson, and by the *Voladores* in Papantla, Veracruz, that have resisted colonial influence.

*and Spain Being la Música de las Cantigas*, Sheehy's *Son Jarocho*, and transcriptions from Geronimo Baqueiro Foster in García de Leon's *Fandango*.

## **II. C. Ritual as used herein**

This study adopts a working definition of “ritual” as a repeated sequence of events, with elements that may, but do not necessarily, include spirituality, and which do include music and dance, with affects and objectives defined by the actors themselves rather than observers. (This is as opposed to “religion,” which includes notions of the sacred with or without specific deities, “ceremony” which includes both religious and secular rites, and “magic” the results of which are also ascribed by the actor, not the observer.)

Concepts of ritual vary according to context. Some focus on form—process or sequences of events; others, on function—goals, effects and affects; and still others, on a combination of the two. In the 1970's, anthropologist Victor Turner proposed a model of ritual that culminated in an enfranchised, shared state he called *communitas*. Talal Asad in his 1988 “Towards a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual,” traced practices from the functional to the symbolic and back. Kristina Wirtz in her 2007 *Ritual, Discourse and Community in Cuban Santería* suggests a recursive interplay of form and function in which the latter emerges as the expected and possibly pre-ordained outcome of the former. Jack Goody in his 2010 *Myth, Ritual and the Oral* surveys historical interpretations that categorize rituals as religious, celebratory, or magic. William Beezley, et al., in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance*, survey a variety of forms and functions of ritual as they manifested in Mexico over the

centuries; shedding light on individual rituals that served multiple objectives according to who perceived them.

When I refer to ritual aspects of *son jarocho*, I mean repeated, voluntary practices that involve the music, are neither necessarily religious nor secular, and of which the intended and actual outcomes are defined individually by each practitioner; this is what Goody and others eventually recommend, as well. For example, many *jaranera/os* may not regard *son jarocho* and its practices as ritual at all. Their motivations may be artistic or social. Nevertheless, some of the related activities are found in rituals. Just as *convivencia* suggests hanging out in the company of a group united across social boundaries by enjoyment of *son jarocho*, *communitas* implies shared experience and dissolution of interpersonal barriers of class, status, or other surface attributes. “The bonds of *communitas*... are undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, nonrational (though not irrational)...” (Turner 52).

Another term that Turner relates to ritual process is “liminality.” This refers to a state experienced during ritual prior to *communitas*, in which conventional identity structures are released into a limbo from which identity may be reinvented, and additional creativity and *communitas* ensue. Bay Area *sonera/os* report various experiences suggestive of liminality, especially when discussing participation in *son*-centered events, such as the ability to play longer than they had believed possible, the ability to *convivir* (loosely, hang out) with otherwise unknown people from different cultures, etc.

Of course, even Turner finds potential fault in ritual: it may facilitate transcendental experiences *or* reification of the status quo; it may promote authentic transformation *or* political posturing. Beezley, et al. contrast observances used to support hegemonic ideology with populist practices serving to aid in resistance (*Rituals xv-xxv*).

Moreover, some ritual practices serve humanitarian goals. For example, religious rituals may yield the upliftment of participants' moral fiber, or specific acts of charity. Secular rituals may facilitate opportunities for identity construction among displaced populations, or provide catharses that promote peace within communities, or more direct interventions for the needy. My informants and I have participated in community activities that link *son jarocho* practice and functions such as these, as well as some which go further to support specific social changes such as immigration reform. These are discussed along with Turner's and Beezley's concerns, and those of Chicana feminism, in my final chapter.

The interventions of Chicana feminist writers provide a rich source of theory with which to frame the applicability of ritual in secularized settings. In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa describes her processes for transcending societal ethnic and gender constructs. She maps out a third space<sup>3</sup> called *nepantla*, as a liminal psychological place where she can attain the *Coatlicue* state, named after the powerful ancient Mesoamerican goddess who has multiple conflicting aspects. She reaches this transcendent state through supportive ritual

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<sup>3</sup> Homi Bhaba is attributed with coining this term.

practices. In *Feminism on the Border*, Sonia Saldivar investigates ways of expressing and maximizing the effectiveness of feminist theory; she proposes that the methods should not be limited by procedures constructed by an oppressive hegemony, and should give voice to the subaltern or multiply oppressed. Chela Sandoval in *Methodology of the Oppressed* identifies methods, which she calls *movidas* (moves, but also tumultuous upheavals) that function best outside the verbal, to include music, dance, and other practices that can “puncture” through habits and ways of knowing to enable change.

The contentions of Wirtz and Asad are germane. The former offers discussion of practices that, like *son jarocho*, are diasporic and syncretic in origin:

Rituals serve to generate distinctive phenomenological experience in participants by enveloping them in lush sensoria and bodily praxis that make symbolic configurations tangible, imbue them with emotion, and enforce them, at least temporarily, as normative. . .Rituals, the saying goes, are both models of and models for the world, which is to say that they set people into distinctive configurations or frames of participation that set up particular expectations about how the event will unfold. . .(6-7).

This frames cause and affect in a somewhat skeptical way that might possibly characterize secular *son jarocho* occasions such as fandango. Thus, in chapter 4, mechanisms of fandango affect are further explored, and chapter 6 explains community dynamics that test her “we can apply (Durkheim’s) insights to ask how what he called a moral community can shape its members’ metaphysical experiences. . .” (14).

In “Toward a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual,” Talal Asad traces Enlightenment-era definitions of religious symbolic forms that use authoritative



sources and figures to exert power. He contrasts these with modernist ethnographic descriptions of non-Western mechanisms in which participation empowers participants or imbues them with direct experiences. The import of symbolism in *son jarocho* seems to be a matter of choice for participants rather than fixed.

This is consistent with Goody's observation that distinctions between sacred and profane, between religion and magic, may not be as absolute in the worldview of some practitioners as it is in that of many Western scholars (30). Hence, my recognition of possible ritual aspects of *son jarocho* practices is not to presume purposes or results, but rather to inquire how participants identify them. Some reported effects evade scientific explanations. For example, aspects of embodied knowledge, as discussed by Asad in *Genealogies of Religion*, Martha González in "Sonic (Trans)Migration" (66) and Karlton Hester in *Africa*, circumvent rationalist thought. Wirtz argues that performativity configures peoples' experiences. While she describes a meta-dynamic that can trigger numinous experiences, the inner mechanisms remain rationally unexplained.

In taking up the affective outcomes of *son jarocho* practices which resemble ritual, it is useful to include scientific thought as to the more fundamental role that ritual holds in survival. Survival was, after all, an issue for many residents of *jarocho* country during the ravages of colonialism. Aiello and Dunbar in "Neocortex" describe early human practices suggesting we evolved with a survival need for community ritual, routine, the ability to measure time through cyclical events and define values in our lives through community processes. For example, grooming

among members of a close group enhanced health; thus, those for whom this was pleasurable had higher survival rates linked to higher group cohesion. Coordinated timing was essential for group migrations in pursuit of food. In some ways, music addresses these same needs, and may have assisted in meeting them.

Music organizes time on the macro level as well as the micro; it provides affirming aural feedback when timing is coordinated. Musicians' repetitive physical motions return soothing effects; listeners experience the lulls or thrills of the predictable when they hear a familiar composition. Music produces commonality of experience within a group. Participative dance, too, provides shared repetitive physical movement, as well as the adrenalin of being visible, the mood-elevating serotonin and pain-relieving endorphins of exercise, and the subsequent calming dopamine of energy discharged, of catharsis. Moreover, the meta-structures that, by repetition, produce ritual, also feature rhythm and coordination.

Child psychologists teach that children should be raised according to set routines, so as to calm them, socialize them, and help them to feel safe.<sup>4</sup> Thus, *jaraneras* of the Bay Area have told of conflicts among community members that dissolved when opponents danced together on the *tarima*, the differences washed away by the importance and acceptance of community and other pleasant affects of fandango.

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<sup>4</sup> This trope is widely disseminated everywhere from the National Education Association through many family magazines available online. Among many academic sources is the article by Guidulbaldi, Cleminshaw et. al. "The Role of Selected Family Environment Factors in Children's Post-Divorce Environments," *Family Relations*, 1986, 35:1, 141-52.

## II. D. Magic

One way to define magic would be as actions of intentional cause-and-effect, the inner mechanisms of which remain rationally unexplained. Jack Goody considers whether, to differentiate it from religiosity, magic is a matter of taking non-rational actions to attain empirical results (21). This would suggest metaphysics. Others relate magic to practices of individuals or small groups, and religion to those of larger groups. When *jarocho* maestro Andrés Flores Rosas speaks of “*la magia de son jarocho*,” however, he is perhaps speaking figuratively about affective ebullience or euphoria. Yet he may also be signifying uncanny artistic feats or numinous affects. Mexican composer Carlos Chávez wrote of magic’s relationship with music, linking it to repetition:

Magic song does not follow any proper system or musical idea: it obeys the basic principles of imitation and repetition...by repetition we understand and learn; and only by repetition do we find it possible to make others understand...Nature itself also teaches us by repetition...we imitate nature in its repetitional procedures. Magic song proceeds by small melodic patterns constantly reiterated (42-4, 98).

Within the milieu of *son jarocho*, references to empirical effects that have no rational or religiously explained causes are found in works by historian and *jaranero* Antonio García de León and anthropologist Alfredo Delgado Calderon, among others. They report uncanny anecdotes in their monographs along with data about metaphysical practices of the *bruja/os* and indigenous people of rural Veracruz, tying it to the verbal content of *jarocho sones* such as *El Pajaro Carpintero* and *El Buscapiés*

(discussed below.) For the purposes of this study, magic will be as defined by the informants.

### **E. *Son jarocho* and religiosity**

I do not claim that *son jarocho* practice is religious; however, some may interpret certain of its practices as such. The term “religiosity” is useful, as it may signify anything from firm adherence to an established religion, to devotion or commitment in practicing activities that are ostensibly secular. Goody cites Durkheim’s linking of “the entire compass of ritual or magico-religious activities...with the sacred as distinct from the profane” (21). This suggests practices that contain aspects of religiosity without pertaining to formal religion. He observes that Parsons classified ritual as “religious” when its goal was non-empirical, but “magical” when its goal was empirical (21). Such a toggle is problematic in that *son jarocho* participants’ goals are not necessarily consistent and are rarely overt. “Religiosity,” however, could pertain to a number of *jaranera/o* practices.

The best source for attributing religiosity is the practitioner, as Goody also concludes. Still, he invokes Frazer’s proposition that religious activities are those that refer to the existence of external agencies. By this criterion, many aspects of *son jarocho* practice would be religious. The traditional opening *son* in a *jarocho* fandango, “*Siquisiri*,” propitiates blessings variously from God, Mary, and others. Some *sones* mention more magical deities and forces such as “La Bruja” (The Sorceress), “La Petenera” (who may be a mermaid, siren or Erzulie/Atabey/Yemanjá goddess), and “Buscapiés” (which refers literally to searching for feet and also to

fireworks that slither around ones feet, but figuratively to much more). Around Catemaco, a lake in the hilly region slightly inland to the south of Veracruz called the Tuxtlas (see Fig. 1 Map 1), *sonera/os* entertain more mystical and religious beliefs than elsewhere, according to Bay Area maestro Jorge Beltrán, a native of nearby Coatepec, Veracruz. He points to lyrics in “Buscapiés”:

<i>Soy relámpago y Estrella          Para empezar a llover          Mi madre fue una centella          Y mi padre un rayo cruel          Hijo de centella y rayo          Diganme quién puedo ser...</i>	I am lightning and Star To start to rain My mother was a spark And my father a cruel lightning bolt Son of spark and lightning Tell me who I may be...
<i>Salve jubilo del cielo          Del excelso y dulce imán          Suave hechizo de este suelo          Vencedora de satan...</i>	Joy of heaven Of the sweet, sublime magnet Smooth bewitchment of this ground Vanquisher of Satan...
<i>El diablo sale a bailar          Pa' mitigar lo que sufre          Cuando empieza a zapatear          Todo empieza a oler a azufre          Y las viejas a rezar.</i>	The devil goes out to dance To mitigate his suffering When he begins to stomp Everything smells like sulfur And the old ladies start to pray.

Several of the known verses of this *son* invoke God, the Virgin, and Jesus to keep the devil at bay. Similarly, uncanny powers are associated with the *pájaro carpintero*, the woodpecker, who is the subject of another *son* (Delgado Calderon 2004). Some twenty *sones* are named for different animals, of which many have folkloric significance beyond their zoological traits. This recalls *Nahualismo*, an indigenous Mesoamerican ontology encompassing aspects of ritual, magic and religion, in which humans are born with animal doubles as spirit guides.

Identifiably religious aspects of *son jarocho* include its accompaniment of Christmas and other holiday festivals. In a ritual of the same name, the *son* “La Rama” (the branch) is sung and played for hours, sometimes day after day, during the Yuletide season, as participants parade through their neighborhood or town optionally in costume but typically bearing a special branch decorated with fruits and lights. The lyrics recount Jesus’ nativity story and return repeatedly to the *estribillo* (refrain):

*Naranjas y limas, limas y limones  
Más linda la Virgen que todas las flores.  
(Oranges and limes, limes and lemons;  
The Virgin is lovelier than all the flowers.)*

This verse is also sung in a similar Puerto Rican *aguinaldo* (composition named for the bonuses such as coins or figgy puddings solicited by carolers). As a ritual in its recently revived forms, La Rama may target no specific transformation of participants. However, their voluntary donning of costumes and choice to spend leisure hours in this activity do provide liminal shifts from the quotidian to *communitas* with co-revelers and hosts. Particularly when traditional alcoholic libations are offered at homes that the musicians visit, the occasion becomes more ecstatic; however, this does not make it formal. While the superstructure of celebrations of La Rama always involves walking and playing the *son* by the same name, individual expressions vary. For some, the entire festival may last no more than a couple of hours and involve only a handful of musicians; while in locations such as Santiago Tuxtla, a much larger group observes the celebrations daily from mid-December until Three Kings Day (January 6). In many, if not all, instances, the atmosphere is relaxed, and other, more secular, *sones* of the participants’ choice are

interspersed with verses and refrains of “La Rama.” Participants, including musicians, may join or depart at any point in the festivity. As a result, the occasion functions for both the devoutly religious and the more transgressively fun-loving. Today in the port of Veracruz as well as in the Bay Area, it bears a good-natured tongue-in-cheek quality, especially when *aguinaldos* are begged and conferred at homes visited. One anecdote from a native of Veracruz suggests that visiting homes during the wandering chant developed as a response to objections by police over public revelry without a destination. Nevertheless, arrival at a specific host’s home resembles, in ways, the culmination of Turner’s ritual model, as everyone gathers in *communitas* after having undergone the shared rigor of donning non-quotidian roles, walking in weather foul or fair, singing, and playing. For those who have celebrated the occasion for many years, the affect may be still more intense. Even in the Bay Area, where the practice is relatively new, some participants celebrated the occasion in their homeland during their youth, and express the appreciation of a warmly remembered tradition.

For some, conceptualizations of ritual include non-religious, non-magical referents. An ostensibly secular New Year’s ritual popular in Veracruz is El Viejo (The Old Man). Like La Rama, it takes place on the streets, often by surprise, lending a transgressive, guerrilla-like quality to its humor. During a recent trip to the port of Veracruz in the days leading up to New Year’s, small groups of costumed musicians and dancers appeared on the back of a truck on a busy street, in the middle of a crowded marketplace, and sauntering down a side road. The reveler who wears an exaggerated costume of an old man may be a youth who is good at dancing. Others

may cross-dress as old women or portray other figures. They perform a Caribbean-style *son* called “El Viejo.” The significance involves dissimulation and resistance. An old man representing the old year is familiar in the U.S., in effete contrast to a baby representing the New Year. In El Viejo, the old man represents not only the old year, but a miserly colonial landlord. He thus symbolizes all evil aristocrats, and his public ridicule provides humor and catharsis. The custom may culminate in burning artistically accurate effigies of political figures. Several sites in Latin America have been claimed as the origin of the observance, including Cuba (Hernández and Díaz-Sánchez), Ecuador (personal communication by Ecuadorian native), and Veracruz. So the custom provides ritual utility and mirth across national boundaries. Participants actively propitiate observers for donations, just as they once propitiated their landlords at the New Year. El Viejo also recalls pre-conquest festivals that marked calendar changes and required indigenous nobility to offer sacrifices in propitiation for good coming seasons. Thus it embodies not only humorous resistance, but religiosity from ancient tradition and cultural syncretism.

Some scholars identify the term “ritual” with religious acts, and “ceremonial” with ritualistic secular occasions. Others prefer a post-modern, pluralistic approach to defining phenomena that are nominally secular, involve music, engage ritual techniques, and are followed in different ways in different places. Terms appear such as “sub-culture,” “scene,” and “lifestyle” (Bennett and Kahn-Harris). Such divergences among scholars reinforce the numerous ways in which ritual, religion, ceremony, and magic are understood, and illustrate the futility of drawing hard lines



between the sacred and the profane, the religious and the secular, the magical and the ceremonial, the empirical and the symbolic. Thus a secular ritual may serve spiritual purposes for at least some of its adherents, and vice versa as in the case of La Rama. Chapters 3 and 4 provide examples of how this works in *son jarocho*. Chapters 5 and 6, on the Bay Area, provide evidentiary examples and anecdotes. The importance of refraining from ascribing significance to the acts of another remains paramount.

#### **F. Transcendence**

This term refers alternately here to overcoming physical obstacles, to philosophical turns beyond Western epistemologies, and to phenomenological affects arising from *son jarocho* practices. Physical obstacles might include decades of disuse, language barriers, gender role expectations, immigration restrictions, lack of musical skills, endurance limits, or sparse funding for projects. An example of philosophical transcendence might be disregard for Western values in favor of traditional arts, political solidarity and home-based community, all of which create well-being even where socio-economic dynamics are bleak. Phenomenological experiences of transcendence arise most often during traditional practices, and may include experiences of self-mastery, identity or community formation, and mental, emotional or spiritual states of catharsis or joy. These modes of transcendence involve levels of engagement and functioning that go beyond the competition for resources and analytical mental states typical of Western epistemologies.

For definitions of other terms, please see the glossary in appendix 1.

## II. G. Methodology

The project of exploring transcendence in Bay Area community practice of a traditional genre entailed over three years of fieldwork that was then interpreted through theories of Chicana feminists such as Chela Sandoval and Sonia Saldivar, as well as new materialist feminists such as Rebecca Coleman and Magdalena Sroda.

The fieldwork involved statistically significant numbers of events and informants, but data were collected qualitatively: formal and informal interviews of some 60 community members along with participation in over 40 fandangos (community ritual events), 30 workshops, and 20 political/humanitarian activist events, concerts, and related rituals. The locations extended from the southern reaches of the Bay Area at Santa Cruz, to Richmond in the north, and included San Francisco, Oakland and Santa Clara, as well as venues in Berkeley, Redwood City, Fremont and San Jose. A trip to the port of Veracruz, Xalapa, and Santiago Tuxtla in *jarocho* country provided perspectives on the originating cultures of *son jarocho* with which to compare, contrast, and contextualize Bay Area practices and values.

My interpretation of findings follows techniques used by Chicana theorists Sonia Saldivar and Yolanda Broyles González, who hold the words—the *testimonios* (testimonies)—of individuals as paramount, independent of academic intervention. With individuals' words I juxtapose intersectional feminist theories that foreground non-analytic, non-academic, frameworks such as Chela Sandoval's music and love, Anzaldúa's third space, or Sroda's atemporal performativity of ethnicity, as possible ways to consider transformative progress in the Bay Area *son jarocho* community.

### Chapter III. Musical origins that transcended cultures and oppression

One of the questions informing this study is “What about this genre has enabled it to transcend the social needs of multiple centuries and countries, and enjoy adoption by many communities today, even after having fallen into periods of disuse?”

One hypothesis is that the artistic needs of those of cultural diversity within hegemonic adversity, which existed during the original rise of *son jarocho*, are mirrored today in post-modern guises. In order to demonstrate this, questions that have been raised by scholars as to the extent of diversity that the genre represents must be addressed. This chapter attempts to do this, through rigorous review of secondary evidence combined with analysis of collateral cultural data sources that have not heretofore been studied.

*“When introduced to son jarocho, it reminded me of my African dance class.”*  
*“When I first heard son jarocho, I noticed similarities to the rhythm and blues I played in bands.”* *“I heard rhythms from my Haitian Voodoo community.”* *“I see the indigenous influence.”* *“No, not really, there is no indigenous influence.”*

The above comments were personal communications; most were by leading scholars of *son jarocho*. Writers generally concede that *son jarocho* encompasses attributes from the arts of Spain, West Africa and Mesoamerica, consistent with the cultures that combined the *jarocho* people.<sup>5</sup> Yet, at least one has called for more rigor in proving such claims. This may be because some people have neglected to cite

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<sup>5</sup> The many works that document this genealogical and cultural triumvirate include those by Delgado Calderon, Anita González, García de León and Pérez Montfort listed in the bibliography.

sources or to give examples, which risks *mitificación*-- wishful mythmaking--when referencing African and Native American influences.<sup>6</sup>

*Únicamente se puede specular acerca de las razones por las cuales algunos autores enfatizan la genesis multicultural del son jarocho antes de realizar una investigación complete y seria. Una puede ser para llenar ciertas expectativas de una subcultura musical o una comunidad académica. Otra posibilidad puede estar fincada en el hecho de que el multiculturalismo está de moda y que, en un intent de ganar aprobación de ciertos elementos dentro de la comunidad jarocho o, incluso, mundial, se le inventan aspectos pluriculturales a la tradición del son jarocho...*

(One can only speculate on the reasons some authors emphasize the multicultural genesis of *son jarocho* before completing a serious investigation. One could be to fulfill certain expectations of a musical subculture or an academic community. Another could be based in the fact that multiculturalism is fashionable and that, in an attempt to win approval of some within the *jarocho* or even world community, multicultural aspects of the tradition are invented...) (my trans.; Kohl 67).

Maestro Artemio Posadas of the Bay Area, in 2002, convened an international conference about African attributes of Mexican *son*, and has personally visited indigenous communities in Mexico. Yet, he remains unsatisfied that the connections have been drawn to these contributory cultures in a manner that is irrefutable.

Whereas those living in the *jarocho* region may hold its cultural origins to be self-evident, others may have had little opportunity to mingle with *jarocho* people or play their music. Moreover, casual listeners may not discern cultural markers such as disguised polyrhythms, melodic traits, and other concrete African stylistic musical elements. A number of scholars have delivered anecdotal findings. This is consistent with oral tradition, frequently used by common people. However, now that *jaranera/o*

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<sup>6</sup> Randall Kohl notes lack of academic rigor in tracing African and Native American influences in *Escritos de un náufrago habitual* (62-8). Rolando Pérez Fernández also affirms the value of such research while making major contributions to it ("*El son jarocho*" 40).

communities are forming outside of Mexico, not only in the United States but in Europe and the Far East too, opportunities for inadvertent dissemination of misinformation have increased.

Various problems arise when seeking information about the cultural origins of non-hegemonic traditions. A few years ago, I asked a music professor from Mexico whether indigenous people had attended a village festival she had filmed. Her answer was “In our state, there are no more *indios*.” Surprised, I rephrased my question. She emphatically reiterated her answer. I rephrased again, but her answer remained the same. This was troubling. Mexico’s *Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI)*<sup>7</sup> reported that, pursuant to the 2010 census, 15,700 people in the professor’s state self-identified as indigenous, and seven thousand of those spoke indigenous languages. Why was the professor so adamant that they did not exist, or had been assimilated? Was she protecting them from an invasive gringo gaze, or from local stigmatization? Was she defending a narrative of *mestizaje* appropriate to her urban home city? Possible reasons are many, all illustrating ways in which origins of any number of cultural expressions may be obfuscated within societies aspiring to participate in, or to avoid participating in, dominant modernist and/or capitalist discourse.<sup>8</sup> Such issues are deep and delicate to unravel. Thus, the sharing by oral tradition of “undocumented” information about ethnic roots may be as much an act of

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<sup>7</sup> John. P. Schmal, “Indigenous xxx” on <http://latinola.com/story.php?story=12495>. The identity and home state of the professor in the anecdote are purposefully omitted.

<sup>8</sup> For example, some cultures have been well served for long periods of time by adhering to traditional values that differ from Western, capitalist epistemologies: concepts of cyclical time that serve to renew and protect the environment, or to maintain contact with deceased loved ones. Others aspire to participate in modern Western culture, where racial prejudice may present obstacles.

resistance or transcendence of an oppressive narrative of disinformation as it is one of mythmaking.<sup>9</sup> Professor of Theater and *son jarocho* scholar Anita González writes, “In a society where ethnic heritage is not reconciled, myths encapsulate hidden histories” (*Afro-Mexico* 1). González, who is African-American, continues, “In both local and global communities public understandings about blackness greatly influence who African Diaspora people think they are... both self-esteem and the sense of belonging...” (2-3). By extension, people of a variety of heritages may have legitimate reasons to avoid mainstream processes of “proving” them. Efforts to tease out the facts may be difficult at best, harmful at worst.

Despite difficulties in establishing authenticity such as these, the problem of verifying origins is not unique to *jarocho* country. Among musicologists, theories of influence, in even European musical canons, are continuously contested and re-written according to subaltern, post-colonial and queer interpretations, or according to emerging musicological methods and opinions.<sup>10</sup> Cultural origins, while important to scholars, are ever elusive. Even though music can be systematically analyzed, its influences still may arrive through unexpected routes, as will be explored later.

Archival data, of course, provides assistance, so we turn there first. Taking into account the extant evidence, some new analyses follow below, in the attempt to further trace and explain the genre’s roots. Please note that this is not an attempt to encyclopedically expound the features and antecedents of *son jarocho*; this would not

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<sup>9</sup> Much has been written about Mexico’s governmental ethnic mythmaking in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century under the tutelage of Vasconcelos and others. For example, see Hutchinson in Najera-Ramirez et al.

<sup>10</sup> Consider, as the tip of the iceberg, Citron’s *Gender and the Musical Canon*, recent re-definitions by various musicologists of the gender preferences of canonized composers, and Gary Tomlinson’s re-definition of musical notation in a possible interpretation of Mesoamerican glyphs.

fit in one volume, and much of the work has already been done by others such as Sheehy, Delgado Calderón, and García de León. I attempt only to collect, sift and organize parts of their work, while bolstering some areas that have not been fully treated. Among the most useful sources available, the work of Rolando Pérez Fernández has not been much cited by scholars, so extensive sections are translated in appendix 2, consistent with García de León's transcriptions of extensive passages from early travelers' journals, etc.

*Son jarocho* comprises a canon of approximately one hundred *sones* some of which date at least as early as the eighteenth century. In addition are several hundred *propuestas* (proposals), *sones* composed more recently. Although older *sones* (and some of their cultural forebears) were transmitted orally, they may still retain evidence of early influences from constituent cultures. Relevant data were archived sporadically through the centuries. For example, separate sources describe dance steps reported during 1840 (García de León, *Fandango* 143), lyrics banned during 1766 (Delgado Calderón 38), and instruments used during 1940 (García de León, *Fandango* 250).

Table 1 summarizes archival findings by attribute within fifty-year segments. It reveals both rich troves and critical holes for evaluating claims about cultural contributions. To fill the holes, we consult contextual cues such as census data on the people that first created *son jarocho*, and the political and religious conditions under which the genre arose. Historical visual arts and narrative writings that depict music and dance practices shed light. Collateral sources—including essays on African

stringed instruments, camouflaging African drums, and disguising pre-conquest Mesoamerican deities or rituals in Catholic ones—provide additional perspectives. The findings are organized in sections on African influences, Mesoamerican contributions, and concurrent Spanish styles. Their purpose is to facilitate further research and better understanding of existing claims. As with any music, complete assurance about originating influences is an elusive goal, in part, because influences may travel many directions at once, as trade and communication routes manifest their *idas y vueltas* (goings and returns.) We investigate this again as we proceed.

**Table 1. Evidence Regarding Attributes of *Son Jarocho* and its antecedents**

*Most of the information in this table was found in invaluable works that collected Inquisition and other archival data. They are by García de León 2006/9 (cited as “G” and page number), Delgado Calderón 2004 (“D”), Sheehy 1979 (“Sh”) and Stevenson 1968 (“St”). These authors did not organize this material by attribute or timespan and did not supply indexes, so this analysis is original and enables the reader to attempt to follow the progress of various attributes over time, or to visualize what is known about a particular time period’s attributes.*

Attribute	1600-49	1650-99	1700-49	1750-99	1800-49	1850-99	1900-49	1950-now
Participants		Cofradías “de nación” of blacks, Indians. St.		Women, Afr., mulatto, sailor, soldier, cowboy, farmer G31 Pardo G 142	Women just dance; mestizos, sailors, soldiers 1816 G-32. G31: Separate for Spanish/criollo v. “popular” (castas)	The term jarocho has emerged. G-33. African/mulatto; “Indians” attend but didn’t dance D 43	All ages/ genders who are able, G274	All ages / genders who are able, fieldwk
Location		Streets, etc.	Saraos and altares; churches too	Rural locations	In or in front of houses, church G 133; San Nicolas, Alvarado, Jalapa, Chinameca, Manantial, forest, cabana, plain, Tlacotalpan	G 31 “Casa del fandango”-ramadas or kiosks in Acayucan, Jáltipan, Tlacotalpan, Santiago Tuxtla, Minatitlán, etc.	Coastal ranch G 208 Alvarado G 273	Outside inside Sotavento Xalapa Seattle, LA, San Diego, Bay Area, NY, etc.
Occasion	G-30 Virgin fiestas	Street festivals, Corpus Christi carnivals, masques G28	Aguinaldos Holy Week; cabildo-led; trade fairs; baptisms	Fandango around saints days G 31 1767; funeral G 106	Baptism, G 133; Actual birth G 132	Candelaria	La Rama Candelaria	
Duration					Dusk to dawn G 126-7; 153; 165; 2 pm to night; D40	Up to a week G-33, 105	1 son=15 min. to several hours; D 55	



Lyrics/ titles	Farming, sailing, piracy, romance pre- conquest and African myth in Busca- pics, Guacam aya, Pajaro carpin- tero G26	La tarasca (dragon pig), Los Negritos, conga El Viejo and La Vieja w/ African vocables; caricatures G 28	G-30 décima against church 1727	G-30 décima making fun of church 1755; Chuchumbé Inquisition 1766 D38; El rubí, Tineo, Pan de Manteca, Borrego, Tango, G 106; Panaderos, Jarabe gatuno	Las Olas del Mar is about a prisoner in San Juan de Ulúa G27  Bomba! G 145	Sones like Butaquito, Maria Justa, etc. may derive from rise of habanera in Cuba G-33; Guacamaya, Torito, and some very bawdy improvised lyrics G 208. D43 –El Torito, Petenera, La Manta, Caimán, El Aguanieve, El Fandanguillo, La Llorona, El Buscapies	Bamba, Morena, Zapatcado, Aguanieve, Jarabe  G 274-5	Ditto— 100 sonets of Sheehy and García de Leon
Dance	Zara- bande, Segui- dilla Tocotine  St 1969	G 27-1697 Sarao is 6 women with torches="La Candela"?	Saraos; congas; tarimas; G30 "danzas de cascabel o zapateado"- seguidilla, zarabanda, chacon	Women & men or 4 men with 4 women, "abrazos, ademanos, meneos, zarandeos" G 32 In- quisition 1766 Zap- pateo G 106	D41 zapateo in place; Belly to belly G-32; tango D-43; 'improper 'embraces; Bamba knots G143 & 160; Tarima G 153 etc. Boleras, fandangos, zarabanda G 127  Tango DC 43	Replacing each other on tarima. If tarima full/maybe if not, feet move expertly but heads and torsos immobile D43	Folklorico developed; straighter backs, etc. A. González. A pareja, a monton, and several pairs G 249, 274. D47: Air of indifference/ dignity, never smile/talk	
	1600-49	1650-99	1700-49	1750-99	1800-49	1850-99	1900-49	1950+
Con- current activities		Trade fairs		G 33 games of chance, cockfights, trade, food and drink; Humor G 110	Fish, almonds & olives G 153; Chiles rellenos, huevos con queso, mole pipil, carne asada, Puerco fresca, frijoles; fruit, candy; water or wine from same glass G 155; Tamales G 157; Licores G 133; Tobacco		Show or espectaculo, dances of other regions	
Rhythms	Zara- bande;  Canario St. 1969	"Congas" of Afro-Mexi- cans and "Tocotines" of Indians			Womens' dances are ¾ or 6/8; pairs may be duple; Waltz & jarabe G159		Marimbola arrived from Cuba (F. Gonzalez, pers. Comm.)	

Dress					Women used flowers & lightning bugs as jewelry G 160 etc.; blouses light cloth, ruffled skirts, silk, muslin, velvet; men wool, broad brim hats, machetes, leather		Women white blouses with short puff sleeves and waist elastic; skirts with lace showing underneath; men with colored pants, heeled shoes, hats, some with woven belt sashes G 249	Anita González notes the pride with which women make and preserve their clothes (2010)
Amplitude/ timbre/ voice					Heard for miles G 153	"Grito herido" D 43 (broken scream)	Best heard from distance G 249; D47 "agudo, punzante falsetto"	Loud, though not amplified (mc)
Instruments				Violins, G 107	Harps, jaranas, requintos, violin, tarima G159 etc.	D 53-54 Custom to baptize jaranas, tarimas; popolucas do it Friday nite; sacrifice chicken and pig; take chick 7 times around tarima; put in tamales; like dance for muertos 21-40 days after to aid passage	Requinto, jarana, segunda, baja sexta, guitarron con espiga, arpa, tacones, panderos, quijadas, marimboas G 250	
Affects:					G 159: "sonolencia y dulce delirio parecido al que experimentamos en nuestros momentos de soledad"; voluptuous	Church prohibition against jarana itself as instrument of devil D 45; esp in Buscapics, "Costilla de Diabolo" diablo is good dancer, a black or white dandy, smells of sulfur gas during religious versos; or lone woman w/ jarana in solitary place		
Texture					"as one voice" G 159		Plucked instrument gives signal next song; jaranas loud G250	
	1600-49	1650-99	1700-49	1750-99	1800-49	1850-99	1900-49	1950+

### III. A. Recognizing African influences

By 1742, the population of New Spain according to census data was about 4% European, 8% African, 30% *castas* of various racial mixes, and 58% indigenous (Aguirre Beltrán, *Población Negra* 234). Many Europeans and Africans entered via the port of Veracruz, where a substantial number of Africans became *cimarrones* (escaped, free) (206-7). By the end of the eighteenth century, the total population of the Papaloapan river basin central to *jarocho* country contained from 43% to 82% Afro-mestizos (Aguirre Beltrán *Pobladores* 100-1). Delgado Calderon comments, “In fact, this reality is reflected in our physical type...” (67, tr. mine). Still, the influence of Africa on *son jarocho* is questioned. Thus, we turn to advice that:

...the identification and evaluation of African roots can be greatly enhanced if the field of inquiry is not limited to the constituents of structure but extended to modes of expression and presentation as well as the values that govern the selection and use of musical materials and music making. In other words, in looking at formative elements, our frame of reference must be the musical culture as a whole (Nketia 334).

Evidence on the *jarocho* area of Veracruz demonstrates that its population from first contact through the next few centuries included a number of African cultures, such as the Mandingan, Congolese, Yoruba, etc.; as well as the Popolucan, Mayan, Totonac, Aztec, etc. among numerous indigenous Mesoamerican cultures (Aguirre Beltrán *passim*). There was also the Spanish culture that included influences from Morocco, Flanders, France, and Italy. Survival needs and human curiosity inspired representatives of these cultures to interact in trade, in negotiations of power, in procreation. The logical extension is that they also shared arts and religious practices,

even if only through indirect exposure. Thus, at least some new forms that emerged, such *son jarocho*, would be subject to intercultural influences.

Evidence of African influences has been forwarded by a number of scholars, with or without documentation or elaboration. For example, García de Leon lists as African traits in *jarocho* music “*percusiones y melodías y giros en la guitarra de son y el arpa*” (percussion, melodies and passages on guitars and harps) (*Fandango* 40). He writes about the Dahomeyan origin of the title of the *son* “El Toro Sacamandú,” which refers to an Afro-Caribbean sorcerer who mediates between gods and man (100). Similarly, “La Bamba” is widely held to refer to any one of a number of African source words.<sup>11</sup> African skin colors are evoked by the titles of “La Morena” and “Los Negritos.” Such references recur in the lyrics of other *jarocho sones*.<sup>12</sup> Scholars liberally reference each other in recognizing call-and-response performance practice and compound duple rhythms as characteristic of West Africa.

However, several types of musical attributes that suggest traditional African practices are not often discussed, particularly in English. The next section considers implications of camouflaged drums, vocal delivery, lutes, dance, and ritual elements.

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<sup>11</sup> “Bamba” is a common surname in parts of Africa. In Swahili it refers to counsel; or holding, detaining, resisting; or a flat thin object (such as a *tarima*?) More Africans in Mexico, however, spoke Bantu languages, in which “mbamba” (pronounced similarly) meant expert, master, or game, and a Shona wedding song is called “Wai Bamba.” “Mbamba” is also the name of a people and a region which is partially in Angola. “Bambarria” is a term coined in the late seventeenth century to refer to pointless procedures such as those implemented in the Port of Veracruz after pirates occupied the city for a period during 1683. That is also when early versions of the famous *son* appeared, according to oral tradition.

<sup>12</sup> Because some similar terms are culturally charged north of the border, it is worth commenting that a Spanish teacher I met in the port of Veracruz, who possesses some African features, insists that in Veracruz, such terms as “negrito” are not “*despectivo*” (disrespectful.)

### III. A. 1. Camouflaged drums

The experiences of Africans in New Spain (as throughout the “New World”) were conducive to developing cultural expressions that involved dissimulation. Whether slaves abducted by colonial human traffickers, escaped maroons (*cimarrones*), sailors, or free merchants desiring to avoid confrontation, many of those with African heritage in early Veracruz had reasons to avoid arousing attention. Hence, many found ways to camouflage artistic and religious traditions that differed from those of the hegemony. Around the Caribbean, names and images of Catholic saints were superimposed over sacred African spirits in syncretic expressions such as Voodoo and Santería.

In places like the British colonies, hegemonic fear of platforms that could foment rebellion led to bans on African drums; responses included dissimulated substitutes that ranged from patting juba (drumming upon ones own body) and tap dancing, to steel drums constructed from scrap in Trinidad.<sup>13</sup> Even the fiddle served a single player the ability to produce polyrhythms and send coded messages through tapping, bowing and plucking it (Cullen Rath 175).

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<sup>13</sup> Native Mesoamerican drums also underwent prohibitions: “in exchange for registering a collective confession about traditional ritual practices at the administrative seat of San Ildefonso, and turning in their ritual implements—such as alphabetic ritual texts and wooden cylindrical drums—each Zapotec community would receive a general amnesty from ecclesiastical prosecution for idolatry” (which was punishable by death and torture) (Tavarez, 413).

Fig. 4. *Músico Negro de Veracruz*. A nineteenth century painting in the *Collección Banco Nacional de México*, by Edouard Pingret, depicts a musician with African features simultaneously strumming, plucking and bowing three instruments with hands, feet and mouth (García de Leon, *Fandango* 60).



Some traditional *son jarocho* instruments serve as camouflaged African drums. One is the *tarima*, the wooden dance platform. Ostensibly a stage for social dance, it also serves to provide a forceful percussion line. The *jarocho zapateado* dancers' feet create powerful cadences and counter-rhythms, further amplified by the resonance holes fashioned into a *tarima*'s sides. This manner of substitute percussion has been noted in Díaz and Hernández, Martha González, Anita González, and elsewhere. I have purposefully listened to *zapateado jarocho* without the strings, and when danced well, the sound can resemble that of West African drum circles.

Less explored, though, is the role of stringed instruments in producing contrasting rhythmic lines as rendered on drums in African genres. *Son jarocho*'s most consistent timbre is that of the somewhat dryly-strummed *jarana*, a lute that provides a chordal *compás* (vigorous ostinato harmonic rhythm.) Often *jaranas* are joined by other plucked strings such as the *arpa Veracruzana* (diatonic harp), the *requinto* or *guitarra de son* (four-stringed lute), and the *leona* (bass lute). These

instruments provide improvised melodic interest, as well as the incipits, or melodic head riffs, of *sones*. The *leona* and *requinto* are plucked with *espigas* (plectrums traditionally carved from horn), rendering them more emphatically percussive. Harpists may amplify percussive timbre through doubling melodic lines at the octave; at times the resultant sonority resembles a marimba's. The plucked lines add to the interplay of rhythms among dancers, vocalists and *jaranas*, producing cross-rhythms, sesquialtrae, and polyrhythms. Musicologists readily cite African influence when they find polyrhythm and syncopation in drummed traditions. The timbre of plucked strings, however, is perhaps more often associated with Spain.<sup>14</sup> That very association may be why plucked strings have been successful at camouflaging African rhythms!

Rolando Pérez Fernández and Ángel Quintero Rivera, musicologists from Cuba and Puerto Rico, respectively, have studied the transfer of drummed rhythms to plucked strings by displaced Africans. Their findings are particularly pertinent, because the Caribbean comprises a basin around the rim of which are Puerto Rico, Cuba, Trinidad, Veracruz, etc. Consequently cultural cross-fertilization was and is frequent.<sup>15</sup>

While Pérez Fernández, as we shall see, applies his analyses of rhythm directly to traditional *sones jarocho*s, Quintero Rivera analyzes the use of strings by maroons in rural colonial Puerto Rico (27-37). The colonization process there had vastly reduced the indigenous Taíno before the end of the sixteenth century. The few who avoided disease or enslavement escaped into what Quintero Rivera calls the

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<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, plucked lute-like timbres likely arrived in Spain from North Africa, via the Moors.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Floyd calls this region the Circum-Caribbean ("Black Music in the Circum-Caribbean").

“hinterlands” of Puerto Rico. Soon, Africans joined them to evade similar miseries. Others came, fleeing the Inquisition’s blood purification programs against Moors and Jews. In order to discourage pursuit by hegemonic forces, these *cimarrones* (maroons) simulated accord with the authorities by helping to fend off invaders to the island. They practiced syncretized versions of Catholicism<sup>16</sup> and played music that sounded Spanish on plucked string *cuatros* (which resemble *jarocho requintos*.) Quintero Rivera’s analyses of incipits of their compositions demonstrate that they contain rhythms characteristic of *bomba*, an African-based Puerto Rican drum genre, and of other drumming patterns heard on plantations.<sup>17</sup>

This suggests a means by which *jarocho* strings might have masked African rhythms. Motivations were similar. Sugar plantations—*ingenieros* or *tabiches*--were as much a presence in the Sotavento heartland of *son jarocho* as they were in Puerto Rico. The Veracruz town of Yanga was arguably the first settlement of African maroons in the Americas. Established a bit inland from the port before the end of the sixteenth century, it was named for its African founder. Thus maroon culture and its basic needs existed in both locations. The Puerto Rican terms *garabato* and *jibaro* are similar in meaning to *jarocho*, referring to rustic classes or qualities.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The colonization process and resultant syncretisms comprise a large topic, important to this study but described elsewhere.

<sup>17</sup> A number of practitioners of *son jarocho* in the Bay Area also practice *bomba*, and some fusion projects have resulted.

<sup>18</sup> Aguirre Beltrán defines *jarocho* as a vernacular term for an African and indigenous racial mixture (*Pobladores* 95.) For more discussion of the origins of the term *jarocho*, see Pérez Montfort and Alicia González. ‘*Garabato*’ has also been linked to an African word for baton, a stick used to signal changes in dance steps.



A rustic Puerto Rican plucked-string genre, the *seis*, was played before the altar in an offering to the Eucharist, but also in dance parties called “fandangos” to which participants would walk for miles and at which--similar to scenes reported in Inquisition documents about Veracruz fandangos --“lascivious” dancing and lyrics outraged church authorities. Quintero-Rivera describes the rhythmic presentation:

The polyrhythmic combination was established in the interplay of other instruments...The guitar, very much identified with Spanish culture (coming really from the Arab-Andalusian tradition) states the basic rhythm...syncopated rhythms are camouflaged through a harmony that “sounds” Spanish (33).

Similarly, Rolando Pérez Fernández identifies African bell patterns, citing them among ten musical attributes of *son jarocho* that signal African origin.<sup>19</sup> He finds particularly notable the propensities for melodic incipits, as plucked on harp or *requinto*, to evoke African bell patterns, and the common African tendency to begin on offbeats. As Kohl challenged scholars to provide further analyses along these lines, I supply some here.

As summarized in table 3, numerous additional *jarocho* melodies evoke, explicitly or implicitly, West African bell patterns or Afro-Caribbean claves. To find these, I applied procedures such as those of Quintero Rivera and Pérez Fernández to transcriptions of *jarocho* melodies made by Daniel Sheehy in Veracruz for his 1979 dissertation (165-275). These are preferable to new transcriptions for identifying influences, because they are several decades older, and changes that might have

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<sup>19</sup> Appendix 2 contains an English translation of large segments from Pérez Fernández’ book “*La Música Afromestiza Mexicana*” and his article in Loza’s *Musical Cultures of Latin America*, “*El son jarocho como expresión musical afromestiza*.” Rather than paraphrase these here, it will better serve English-language readers to read the translated original.

ensued would not likely yield any better resemblance to colonial performance practice. My analyses generally treat opening melodies, although they occasionally extend to refrains.

To assist with interpretation of table 3, table 2 offers a notational framework for African bell patterns and claves to compare with the transcriptions. Various sources notate these patterns in different meters and conventions. In fact, many variations of the patterns themselves exist, and Pérez Fernández covers this at length. However, that goes beyond the scope of the inquiry at hand. From among transcriptions such as those of Kofi Agawu, Lois Wilcken, and others, I settled on a simplified set of patterns that is relatively easy to understand and use. They combine the work of Pérez Fernández with that of John Amira and Steven Cornelius:

**Table 2. African bell patterns and claves**

<i>From Amira/Cornelius 23:</i>	
Afro-Cuban batá clave (Nigerian 2/3)	d 7 d 7 7 d\ 7 d 7 d 7 7
<i>From Pérez Fernández in Loza 43:</i>	
West Nigerian, Togo, etc. standard pattern	d 7 d 7 d d 7 d 7 d 7 d
West Nigerian in 5-stroke (2/3)clave	d 7 d 7 7 d 7 d 7 d 7 7
East Angolan standard bell pattern	d 7 d 7 d 7 d d 7 d 7 d
East Angolan in 5-stroke (3/2) clave	d 7 d 7 d 7 7 d 7 d 7 7
Axial=*; Initial = ^	* ^
Greater pulsation	d 7 7 d 7 7 d 7 7 d 7 7

Note that the West African bell patterns bilaterally offset each other, where one side contains 7 beats and the other 5. Similarly, the 3/2 clave shown here is an offset of the 2/3. Although claves are often performed in duple, Amira and Cornelius notate them in compound duple; thus their correlation with the Nigerian bell pattern is visible. The terms “axial” and “initial” derive from Pérez Fernández’ 2003 discussion of how performances of bell often begin part way through a pattern, at the “initial” location such as the second beat signified with “^”. This recalls the propensity for *jarocho* compositions to begin on offbeats. The two beat offset masks the bell, represented by the melody instrument in *son jarocho*, creating a singular offbeat affect. This suggests camouflage coding that is best accessible to the attuned emic ear. The “axial” point aligns with the start of the “greater pulsation,” played by jaranas in *son jarocho*. Polyrythms and cross rhythms ensue through this juxtaposition.

**Table 3. Jarocho incipits with bell patterns**

Key:

“d” = eighth note; “**d**” = possible stroke of clave or bell; “7” = eighth rest; “d.” = dotted 8<sup>th</sup> stroke; “**d**” = 16<sup>th</sup>; “7” = 16<sup>th</sup> rest.

When a beat is sometimes sounded and sometimes not, it is notated in *italics>*.

To help locate strokes from bell patterns, bold face is added to some motifs.

Bar lines (\) are included to help orient the reader to Sheehy’s notation.

Most motifs begin on off beats.

Most melodies are in compound duple and were originally notated by Sheehy in 3/4; exceptions are indicated.

Name of Son	Rhythm of Incipit, Verse or Estribillo (Refrain) Intro	Similar Bell Pattern or Clave
<i>E. Angolan Bell Pattern</i>	<b>d 7 d 7 d 7 d d 7 d 7 d</b>	For comparison
El Aguanieve	<b>d d d 7\ d d 7 d d 7\ d 7</b>	Offset E. Angolan bell starts on <u>d</u>
El Balajú	<b>d 7 d 7\ d 7 d d d d\ d d</b>	E. Angola standard bell
El Cascabél	<b>d 7 d 7 d 7\ d d d 7 d d.</b> \7.	E. Angola standard bell
*El Coco	<b>d 7 d 7\ 7 d d d d d\ d d</b>	W. Nigerian, 3/2 clave offset 2 8ths
El Fandanguito	<b>d 7\ d d d d. d d. d. d 7 d 7 d</b>	Nigerian bell
El Gallo	<b>d 7 d. d\ 7 d 7 d d d\ 7 d</b>	Nigerian bell offset 2 8ths
La Guacamaya	<b>d 7 d 7\ d d 7 d d d\ 7 d</b>	3/2 son clave/Nigerian bell
*La Iguana	<b>d 7 d 7\ d d 7 d d 7\ d d</b>	W. Nigerian bell pattern: similar to Guacamaya, Coco
<i>W. Nigerian Bell Pattern</i>	<b>d 7 d 7 d d 7 d 7 d 7 d</b>	For comparison
La Indita	<b>d 7 d. d\ 7 d 7 d d. d\ 7 d</b>	Same as El Gallo, similar to Iguana, Guacamaya, Coco
María Chuchena	<b>d d d\ 7 d d d 7 d\ 7 d 7</b>	East Angolan offset 2 8ths
*La Morena	<b>d 7 d 7\ d d 7 d d 7\ d 7</b>	Angolan bell in incipit and refrain with axial point <u>d</u> to offset 2 8ths
Los Pollitos	<b>d 7 d 7\ d d 7 d d 7\ d d</b>	Nigerian bell same as Iguana
El Toro Zacamandú	<b>d 7 d d 7 d d 7 7 d d</b> <u>d</u> d Ay no más no más cuan-do los	Aspects of Nigerian bell, offset 2 8ths
La Tuza	<b>d 7 d. d\ 7 d 7 d d. d\ 7 d</b>	See El Gallo, La Indita
<i>Angolan 3/2 Clave</i>	<b>d 7 d 7 d 7 7 d 7 d 7 7</b>	For comparison
El Jarabe Loco	<b>d d d\ d d 7 d d d\ 7 7 7</b> Pa-ra can-tar el ja-ra-be	3/2 Angolan clave-this might be analyzed various ways

\*These *sones* have been previously analyzed by Pérez Fernández, whose presentations varied slightly from mine.

Table 3 includes several melodies that have not previously been formally evaluated for African rhythmic patterns. Some are remarkably similar—the rhythm of “La Guacamaya,” for example, resembles Pérez Fernández’ “El Coco” and “La Iguana.” Many *sones* remain to be analyzed, and the additions of more scholars’ interpretations will be useful.

The East Angolan standard pattern is suggested in the motifs of “El Aguanieve,” “El Balajú,” “El Cascabél,” “El Jarabe Loco,” “María Chuchena,” and “La Morena.” The last two follow the same pattern, but enter on different beats. “El Cascabél” perhaps demonstrates the greatest departure from strict durations of beats, while still holding to the spirit of the pattern. The West Nigerian/Togo pattern appears in “El Coco,” “El Fandanguito,” “El Gallo,” “La Guacamaya,” “La Iguana,” “La Indita,” “La Tuza,” “Los Pollitos,” and “El Toro Zacamandú.” The patterns are almost identical in “La Tuza,” “El Gallo,” and “La Indita,” very different *sones*.

Due to the close relationships between claves and bell patterns, some readers may hear traces of others than those listed here. Moreover, African performance of the bell patterns, in some contexts, has included wide variances within standard patterns, as documented by Pérez Fernández. This increased as the Afro-Caribbean claves developed. In addition, if the original creators of *son jarocho* were coding bell patterns through strings, the use of variations would have assisted in the dissimulation. Again, a number of my informants whose backgrounds are in African and Caribbean styles report hearing African patterns in *son jarocho*, without embarking upon extensive analysis or harboring hidden agendas of wish fulfillment.

Pérez Fernández notes that, often, *son* melodies played by harps or *requintos* start on the third eighth note in a measure of 6 or 12 eighths, thus offsetting their rhythms against contrasting rhythmic patterns that begin later on a first beat, played by *jaranas* (“*El son jarocho*” 43). This, he remarks, reflects a common practice of African bell part performance—beginning a few beats into a bell pattern rather than on its first stroke, and some two beats into a meta-arrangement of “greater” (constant) pulses. Therefore, when analyzing motifs for bell patterns, this possibility must be evaluated. Among those evaluated above, the feature appears in “El Aguanieve,” “El Gallo,” “El Coco,” “Maria Chuchena,” “La Morena,” “La Indita,” “El Toro Zacamandú,” and “La Tuza.” The affective result of this procedure, whether found in African music or *son jarocho*, has been described by scholars and informants as “*picante*,” “continually upbeat,” “annoyingly happy,” “disorienting,” “pure joy” and “like flying.” Sesquialtera is also found throughout the genre, and two-against-three cross rhythms abound in performance practice as they do in West African genres. Here are some *sones* for which the opening melodies enter on the second beat.

El Balajú	El Cascabel
El Coco	El Gallo
El Gavilancito	La Guacamaya
El Huerfanito	La Iguana
La Indita	La Morena
El Pájaro Carpintero	El Pájaro Cú
Los Pollitos	Siquísirí
El Torito Jarocho	La Bamba

In addition to the melodic lines, in some *sones* the part of the *jarana* (the accompanying chords, the rhythms of which Pérez Fernández refers to as the “greater pulsation”) enters on the second beat, before establishing the downbeat.

### III. A. 2. Delivery style

Limited melodic development is reflected in the term for the lead singer—*pregonero* (literally, “caller” or “crier”). Similar to the manner of a town crier, the *pregonero* straightforwardly intones the text in a high, loud voice. As a consequence of this attitude toward the communication of the text, melody many times hovers around a single pitch, usually the dominant degree, focusing maximum attention on the text (Sheehy 136).

This description of *jarochos* singing recalls that the role of town crier, and its style, has existed in some African cultures. According to Aguirre Beltrán, many seventeenth-century African arrivals to Veracruz came from the region of the huge Mandé Empire that extended beyond where Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, and Guinea are now (*Población Negra* 107). Richard Cullen Rath traces the practices of *jalis* (*griots* or professional musicians who traveled and accompanied themselves on chordophones) from that Empire. He links their singing not so much to the oral history that it ostensibly conveyed, as to camouflaged commentaries that transferred in this hemisphere to cryptic lyrics and to musical instruments:

Whereas court music represented power, *jali* songs described and explained it. The music of the *jali* tradition... is more like a text. It is an editable, manipulable, analyzable medium which can be recalled in the same form. The songs were not documents of the past so much as a means of encoding information. Usually what they encoded was some sort of legitimation of, or recipe for, power and its use. The *way* violins were used (in colonial America) was as a *jali* form of storing powerful traditions, namely, court drumming patterns and the rhythms of military dance. These stored forms could be reconstituted as direct manifestations of power. They were an effective way of transmitting knowledge... (93-4).

Such procedures may not have been unique to *jelis*, but their countrymen comprised a good number of those who inhabited Veracruz during *son jarocho*'s formative era. Not only did stringed instruments disguise rhythm in the genre, but rhythms and sung messages coded cultural wisdom, traditions and techniques. *Son jarocho*'s declamatory style also echoes that of *jeli* song.

A few years ago, I attended a fandango at the home of a local *jaranera* where members of Mono Blanco, the famous *grupo* from Veracruz, were in attendance. The singing and *djembe* drumming of a gentleman with African features caught my interest. It evoked the delivery of *jelis* from Mali and Senegal. His singing was declamatory, full-voiced and placed between head and chest, with tessitura in the moderate to upper part of the range, and a fluidity of rhythm against polyrhythmic stringed accompaniment. When I asked, the singer said he was from Senegal. I told him his *jarocho* singing was very effective and asked how he had come to it. He responded, "I teach at a school with a *jarocho maestra* who asked me to play with her; it felt natural to me as it is like the music I know."

Delivery style defines *son jarocho* as much as any other attribute. It is declamatory, as in operatic recitative; sung with emphasis, not yelled; *forte*, not forced; treble, not falsetto. It evinces rubato and syncopation, embellishing and improvising on melodies and rhythms, with early or late entries, and liberal intonation. The general melodic contour often moves from high to low in a range of a fifth or sixth, similar to many *jeli* melodies. Improvisation of melodies, rhythms and lyrics notwithstanding, however, they rarely if ever diverge from syllabic settings.

Individual *cantadores* employ gradations of “grain of the voice;” some are drier with indeterminate pitch, while others, such as *Son de Madera*’s Tereso Vega, quite operatic. Improvisation of rhythms, melodies and words over a repetitive, contrapuntal accompaniment also recall *jeli* performance practice. Is this coincidence, or precedence?

Interaction between the Mandé (Mandingan) Empire, where the *jeli* tradition originated, and Mesoamerica may have begun long before the conquest.<sup>20</sup> Although some scholars challenge that, census archives do indicate that at least 200,000 Africans came to Veracruz between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Mandingans, Wolofs and others from the Mandé Empire arrived first; later, people from Angola, Congo, Mozambique, etc. also arrived (Aguirre Beltrán 220-41). Soon *cimarrones* (maroons) began to establish settlements and to intermarry with indigenous people. A child with at least one indigenous parent had freedom under the law.

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<sup>20</sup> The Empire had sent ships making use of strong currents to arrive in this hemisphere, at least by the thirteenth century (Van Sertima, 1976, 39-69). There is a town in the Sotavento, near the coast, named Mandinga. Similarities to African deities, language and rituals appear in aspects of prequest cultures of Veracruz. Ek Chuak is an ancient black Mayan deity who traveled, played the trickster, dressed in coyote skins and quetzal feathers, and was a trader and warlord; Ekwensu is an ancient spirit, with the same traits, of the Igbos in West Africa. Characteristics of Ek Chuak’s manifestations and rituals are also found in traditions of the Bambara of Mali, the Mandinga and the Soninke (Van Sertima, 1976, 99-102). Some pre-Christian giant Olmec heads also exhibit African physiognomy and headgear; other early sculpture resembles the Egyptian sphinx. Both societies used a calendar based on Venus’ cycles. Other evidence has been much disputed and there is some political charge to both sides of the argument.





Figs. 5, 6. Left and middle: Two of over a dozen colossal heads. Dated well before the Christian era, found near Veracruz during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, now in the *Museo de Antropología de Xalapa*, and ascribed to the pre-Mayan Olmecs. The features and headgear seem possibly to be African. Author is pictured to show scale.  
 Fig. 7. Right: One of two Olmec-era sphinxlike statues in museum..

Here is part of a translation of a Mandingan *jali*'s opening phrases from the thirteenth century:

We are the vessels of speech, we are the repositories which harbor secrets many centuries old...without us the names of kings would vanish to oblivion, we are the memory of mankind, by the spoken word we bring to life the deeds and exploits of kings for younger generations...(Van Sertima 39).

Compare that with some lines of the traditional *son jarocho* that opens fandangos, “*El Siquisiri*”:

Good evening gentlemen,  
 Ladies and misses,  
 To all the little flowers  
 With captivating faces  
 Go the best verses  
 From these noble singers...  
 Oh yes, yes, no  
 In the name of God I begin  
 Oh yes yes no  
 I would not like to begin  
 Now yes, Tomorrow no  
 Because he who begins finishes...

Both are introductory gestures to a crowd, but the *jali* has a more official position in society, who probably needs to muffle aspects of his song that are interpretive, recreational or satirical, while the *jarocho* singer is a marginalized leader who must code important messages and emphasize the more recreational aspects of the occasion. Both are delivered with forthright assurance, such that they could be heard over an orchestra of strings in an outdoor venue, and remembered.

Of course, *jali* was not the only style of singing among the many cultures of Africa. Nketia describes another genre, *kwadom*, in detail. This form was performed at court among the Asante people of Ghana (one of the regions from which Africans came to Mexico.) Several of Nketia's *kwadom* observations also describe *son jarocho* delivery:

It may be sung by two people...normally they stand to sing...It may be sung...as long or extended poems...in a declamatory style in long sequences...singers sing the same phrase or sentence alternately...a narrow range of notes is used, usually five consecutive notes within a fifth or sixth. The starting note is usually the highest note or the next... (49).

This recalls the archetypal *son jarocho* performance practice of call and response between two standing singers.

South of Ghana along Africa's west coast is the homeland of the Yoruba. Karlton Hester describes their song delivery in a way that recalls the declamatory style of *son jarocho*:

Words spoken for reasons of communication take on a musical aesthetic; a conversation between two individuals easily develops the rhythm, pacing and pattern of a quasi-musical performance. One Nigerian musicologist reports that, "Yoruba folksongs are, without exception, sung to the tonal inflection of words..." (*Africa* 38-9).

As with *kwadom* and *son jarocho*, Hester informs us that Yoruba “scales and melodies encompass a narrow range and tetrachordal and pentachordal spans...” (47.)

Another vocal idiom found in Africa (albeit not unique to the continent), is the call to prayer of the Muslim *muezzin*. While the melismas in some *adhan* do not bespeak the syllabic style of *son jarocho*, the assertive vocal projection, as to a whole community, and Arabic microtones such as the half-flatted third degree, do occur in the Mexican genre. Elements of Muslim declamatory vocal production<sup>21</sup> pervaded Spain during centuries of Moorish occupation, and are found to this day in flamenco singing of Andalusia, from which many Spaniards arrived in Veracruz. However, again, melismatic figurations did not translate to *jarocho* styling; and while the assertiveness and improvisational quality of vocals do correlate, flamenco itself developed in parallel with, or even after, *son jarocho*, as will be discussed in the section on Spanish influences.

### **III. A. 3. Lutes and other instruments**

Among scholars, Spain traditionally garners credit for the lutes of Latin American genres. Conquistador ships brought musicians who played guitar-shaped chordophones and sung strophic *romanzas* in the manner of Juan Encina. Yet, neither lutes nor the guitar shape originated in the Iberian peninsula; they likely arrived there by way of North Africa, with the Moors who ascended to power in Spain in 711 C.E., or earlier via Egyptians, Phoenecians or Romans. The difficulty in pinpointing an

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<sup>21</sup> “Muslim idiom” may be a contested term, due to prohibitions against music by some sects of Islam. However, *adhan* recital is certainly stylized according to idiom, even if it is not considered music.

original source of lutes stems from their worldwide popularity as portable instruments that could sound multiphonics. Still, several facts signify likely African influence in *jarocho* chordophones. These include the events of 1492, as well as the construction, names and ages of some West African lutes.

The traditionally-taught objective of Columbus' 1492 sea excursion has been contested with evidence that the explorer already knew of the lands that were to become Latin America and was heading directly for them when he landed in what is now the Bahamas (Van Sertima, *They Came Before Columbus* (3-20); Hester *Survey* 173-7; Tharoor, "Muslims discovered"). In the same year, Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain finished a twenty-year campaign against the Moors by taking Granada, and required Moors who wished to stay in the country to convert to Christianity. Simultaneously, the monarchy commanded Sephardic Jews to convert or leave; some 165,000 chose exodus (Gioia 208-9). Thus, many with African or Middle Eastern heritage undertook sea passage to the West, and brought "non-Western" musical styles, instruments and practices. *Vihuelas* and early guitars, both of which replaced Moorish lutes in attempts to distance Catholic Spain from appearances of Islamic influence in the late fifteenth century, arrived in the Americas, too.

Yet, *jaranas* have attributes, such as trough construction, that do not resemble the above-mentioned instruments. Where and how did these originate? Eric Charry studies the lutes of West Africa, tracing their construction, their origins, and their incidence in Spain. Some of his findings correlate with the lutes of *son jarocho*: resonator construction, string configuration, luthiering procedures, and nomenclature.

Lutes played by *jelis* have trough resonators, usually carved from a piece of wood. The resonators of *jaranas* are similarly constructed, unlike those of Spanish *vihuelas* of the time. Another important commonality between *jeli* lutes and *jaranas* is that players of both may leave one or more “*cuerdas sueltas*” (open strings) that serve as a drone against the other notes played. García de León refers to this drone string as a “mantra” and similar procedures were followed in renaissance Andalusia and the Magreb of Northern Africa (41). Both *jaranas* and *jeli* lutes come in multiple sizes and tunings, and both have similar proportions between the lengths of the necks and resonators. However, the neck of the *jarana* is carved from the same piece as the resonator, while *jeli* lutes have separate necks that are tied to the resonators, and the *jarana* has a wooden face while the *jeli* lute’s face is a membrane.

Charry notes that Mandé *jeli* tradition does not take credit for inventing the lute, while it does claim invention of the *balafon* (a marimba-like idiophone.) Still, *jeli* lutes are documented in fourteenth-century accounts by Muslim visitors from the East, which means that West Africa had lutes before Spanish colonial times (Charry 3). The *jarana*’s trough construction and drone strings, therefore, could have been refashioned by Africans in Mesoamerica.

Since West African lutes did not come from the Iberian Peninsula, Charry speculates whether they came from ancient Egypt, from which are preserved pictographs of lutes that resemble some of those later used by *jelis*. The guitar shape and the *jarocho* manner of holding the *jarana* high on the chest is visible in these ancient Egyptian pictures. Charry envisions a path up the Nile through Kush and

Nubia and then west across Sub-Saharan Africa toward the ancient kingdom of Ghana, but is unable to tell the direction in which lutes may have first traversed this route. Attempting to deduce this, he traces the etymology of West African chordophone nomenclature in several languages. Several of the names are phonically similar to “*jarana*.” For example, the Wolof *xalam* was a *jeli* lute used in the region from which many Africans arrived in Veracruz.<sup>22</sup> Another West African lute name is the Fulbe/Hausa “*hoddu*” (the “h” sound starting the first syllable like the Mexican “j” in “*jarana*”, and the lingual flip of Mexican “r” resembles “d” to begin the second syllable.) Another Fulbe term for lute has been “*kerona*,” the Mexican “j” is sometimes aspirated gutturally so as to resemble a “k.” Similarly, two West African languages, Dosso and Maori, have lute words that transcribe “*gurumi*.” Finally, a Moorish term for *jeli* lute is “*tidinit*.” The first letter does not resemble Mexican “j”, but the consonants starting the second and third syllables sound like those that start the second and third syllables of “*jarana*.”<sup>23</sup> None of these data prove the origin of *jarocho* lutes. “Jarana” is also a Spanish term for “party.” However, it forms an onomatopoeia with the sound of a quickly strummed lute. This could explain why it sounds similar in several languages.

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<sup>22</sup> The Mexican “j” –as in “*jarana*”-- and “x” are often used interchangeably, both sounding somewhat like a guttural “h”, although the Wolof “x” has a more stopped “k” or “ch” sound; the “l” and the Mexican “r” that begin the respective second syllables are formed similarly by the tongue; and the final “m” and “n” are often blended into a vague nasality without closure, in languages like the French spoken in much of West Africa today and in Mexican words like “*bien*.”

<sup>23</sup> On the topic of language ties between West Africa and the Sotavento, the etymology of “*fandango*,” which was used across Mexico and into California for various fiestas, in the Caribbean, and in Spain more often as the name for a particular dance, has been suggested by Ochoa Serrano as stemming from a Bantu word “*fanda*” which means, loosely, “to live, or to hang out together.”

West African *jelis* traditionally perform solemn rituals of selection, propitiation and gratitude to the trees from which balaphones are cut. This has been true, as well, of the *jarocho*s when making *jaranas*, at least until the recent surge of *son jarocho*'s popularity led to relatively mechanized techniques of manufacture. Similarly, when *jarocho*s make *panderos* (octagonal *jarocho* frame drums reminiscent of North African instruments) a traditional technique is to raise and propitiate the goats from whose hides the striking surfaces are made:

To make *jaranas* is a total art: the tree from which it is going to be made must be mature, without knots; the trunk must be used, not the branches or high parts. It has to be cut at a particular moon phase so that the wood does not get irritated, and as among indigenous peoples, the *chaneque* (deity presiding over the forest) must be propitiated for permission, and copal (Mesoamerican resin incense) and candles must be left at the foot of the tree. The part that will be used must dry in the shade, preferably an attic, and some luthiers begin construction according to certain days like Tuesday or Friday, or wait for a certain position of the moon...when the *jarana* is finished, some baptize it and give it a name, or put it place it before the household altar (common in Mesoamerica even today) for seven days before playing it the first time. Until very recently the construction was done with a machete, braces and gouging...to attach the face to the sound box homemade glues were used, such as that made with a base of silver sweet potato or from lime and milk (my trans.; Delgado Calderon 58).

These procedures recall those associated with the making of *jeli* balaphones. They are not spoken of in the production of Spanish lutes or guitars. Yes, *jaranas* do sport tracery and wooden faces and frets like those on some Spanish guitars; it would be foolish deny the influence of Spanish chordophones on Mexican music. But there is at least circumstantial evidence that *jarocho* chordophones incorporated aspects from more than one of the contributory cultures of those who made them in the Sotavento. African influence is suggested by the trough construction of the resonator, the ritual



Fig. 8. Left: *Jarana* under construction. Xalapa, Veracruz laudería (lutherie) of Ramón Gutierrez Hernández. The neck and body are carved from a single piece of wood. Fig. 9. Right: Malian *ngoni*. Similar size, with resonator carved from wood, but membrane face and separate neck. This shape is shown being held high on the chest like a *jarana* in ancient Egyptian pictographs (Charry, 1996).

propitiation of the materials, the practice of maintaining an open string, and the very name “*jarana*.”

Other instruments common in the performance of *son jarocho* have possible origins in Africa. The diatonic *arpa jarocho* (Veracruzian harp) may stem from antecedents similar to the multitude of *enangas*, *koras*, and remarkable harps that proliferated in Africa over many centuries. The *kora* used by *jelis*, with some features of the lute, is quite different from the *arpa jarocho*. Other harps were familiar to West Africans who came to Veracruz, but not to the indigenous peoples. Of course the Spanish had harps too, but as with lutes, they may have acquired them from the Moors.





Fig. 10. *Arpa jarocha*. City Museum of Veracruz. Diatonic construction, 32-36 strings.

To add complexity, the Veracruzian harp and its use bear resemblance to those found in Venezuela and other parts of South America where Africans, Spaniards and Native Americans intermingled. The actual facts as to provenance of *jarocha* chordophones will probably never be settled. Robert Lopez Moreno gives some advice for handling problems like these, from a perspective emic to Mexico, in his article “The Central American Marimba Didn’t Come From Africa...and Also Did Come from Africa” (my trans.; 62-9). In writing about this ongoing organology debate, he demonstrates the inadvisability of attempting to too firmly fix origins with the example of crediting Africa with the origin of the Mesoamerican *huehuetl* because it is a vertical membranophone, a category of drum of which older specimens have been found in Africa. The *huehuetl* is a sacred Mesoamerican instrument, and whether it originated in Africa and was brought here long before the conquest by the same people who inspired the Olmec heads, or whether it developed in parallel in both hemispheres, is a secondary issue. Lopez references Leonard Acosta’s comments about the futility of

trying to glean the essence of music by tracing its origins—the field of the uncertain—and his preference for studying musical phenomena as historical *process*. We have attempted to do so here, in considering a variety of possible origins for the *jarana*.

### III. A. 4. Dance

Once an art form becomes nationalized, it is challenging to identify its specific cultural roots. However, dance studies provide some useful ways to locate African Diaspora elements in folkloric dance...I have seen dancers trained in smaller, more provincial communities perform Jarocho dance with broad expressive shoulder shudders and circular hip movements that are uncharacteristic of staged Jarocho folklore (González, *Afro-Mexico* 114-5).

Such body movements, especially of torso and head, are common in some West African dance. While González is describing the propensity for staged folklórico performances of *jarocho* to minimize them, Veracruzán dance *maestra* Rubí Oseguera, during workshops in the Bay Area summer 2014 and fall 2015, repeatedly emphasized the importance of hip and shoulder movements as well as the footwork.

The *zapateado* dance of *son jarocho*, which camouflaged African percussion procedures, should boast African influence. However, the sensory impact of its colonial-style full skirts and sonorous heel stomps often evokes Spain, particularly flamenco, to westerners. Yet, just as plucked chordophones have more than one source, so does flamenco—which, as an established genre, did not evolve any earlier than *son jarocho*. Some scholars now contend that practices founded in the Americas informed flamenco by way of the constant *idas y vueltas* (goings and returns) between the hemispheres (“Flamenco” *New World Encyclopedia*). Flamenco was informed by marginalized ethnicities in Andalusia such as Moors, Jews, and Gypsies;

similarly, *son jarocho* represented the muses of a mixed of marginalized *castas*.

**Table 4. Some characteristics of *son jarocho* found in contributory cultures**

Characteristic of <i>Son Jarocho</i>	West Africa	North Africa	Spain/ Europe	Meso/Native America
Compound duple	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not available
Sesquialtera & cross rhythm	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not available
Polyrhythm	Yes	No	No	Not available
Bell patterns	Yes	No: Iqa'at	No: Palos	No: Drum patterns
Second beat entry common	Yes	Not available	No	Not available
Descending melody of +- a fifth	Yes	Some	Some	Some
Syllabic	Yes	Not as much	Some	Yes
Declamatory	Some	Yes	Some	Some
Coded text	Yes	Yes	Some	Yes
Lutes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Harps	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Trough resonator	Yes	No	No	No
Lute names sound like jarana	Yes	Yes	No, but jarana =slang for party	No
Ritual luthiering procedures	Yes-balafons, harps	Not known	No	Yes similar – teponaxtle etc.
Dance: community participation	Yes	Some	Some	Yes
Dance: hips, shoulders, arms, bend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dance: improv, challenges, comm	Yes	Yes	Flamenco	Not available
Dance: seamless w/music	Yes	Some	Some	Yes
Dance: mimicry	Yes	Some	Some	Some
Dance: stomping	Yes, various	Yes, Berber	Yes, Flamenco, jota	Yes, Green corn, etc.
Ritual heritage	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Text topics	Some	Some	Some	Yes
Poetic forms	Call/response	Rhymed couplets	Yes	Rhymed couplets

Key: Yes means definitely identified above or common knowledge; No means definitely not; blank means no evidence as of this point, and Some means in only some cases. Not available or blank means Not known.

Africa contributed to *jarocho* dance, but this must be discerned through layers of camouflage. To do this, Samuel Floyd provides strategies that recall Nketia's advice to consider music in its cultural context, such as taking the perspective of

...conflation—indeed, near-inseparability—of Afro-American music and dance” and appreciating that “black music and its traits, elements, and practices depends upon our understanding ... (of its call and response...polyrhythms, ...heterophony...bent notes...off-beat melodic phrasings...repetition...individuality within collectivity...game-rivalry; etc.)...as accompaniments to and ingredients of black dance. For our initial strategies must accept black music as a facilitator and beneficiary of black dance (“Ring” 268).

Floyd's reference to game-rivalry recalls the Puerto Rican *bomba* genre that was camouflaged in *garabato* strings. It involves challenging interplay between drummers and dancers to imitate improvised rhythms. Flamenco dancers also interact improvisatorially with musicians, but as performers, not as community participants in practice. *Son jarocho* involves such improvisatory challenges in community, as noted by Anita González:

African dances, in community context, usually involve moments in which the performers challenge the musicians with...rhythmic play and establishment of human relationships by means of gesture. Jarocho dancers at community gatherings (*fandangos*)...make extensive use of rhythmic play. After the lyrics...are completed, there is a musical interlude during which dancers are invited to mount the *tarima*...and respond, through rhythmic sound, to the musicians, to one another, and to the audience. This is an improvisational moment that challenges dancers to demonstrate their best work...Improvisation that occurs at the local, community level is not generally included in staged folkloric performances (*Afro* 116-8).

The attached video contains clips that illustrate these features of interplay and challenge in community *fandangos* among paired *jarocho* dancers, improvised vocals and dancers, and instrumentalists and dancers. On one occasion, a singer improvised

a verse about a dancer's colorful skirt while she was on the *tarima*. Another time, an experienced *bailadora* who wished not to be named told me:

When two women dance together, they need to be in complete communication, complete sync. In *jarocho* country, they are *comadres* who know everything about each others' lives; this must be reflected on the *tarima*. They need to stay close.

Nevertheless, when mixed couples dance, the rules of engagement change:

Jarocho, when performed spontaneously at a fandango or a public festival, is a competitive courtship event. The male dancer challenges the woman by creating heel beats on the raised *tarima* platform. With his hands behind his back, he gazes at the woman, who mounts the *tarima* and begins her own stomping rhythmic pattern to accompany his. Couples circle one another like hens and roosters, turning their heads to look over and around their own shoulders. If the woman wears pants rather than a skirt, she holds her arms stiffly at her sides, while the man keeps his hands crossed behind his back. The dance is a sexual play of head, torso, and facial gestures, coupled, of course, with the continuing rhythmic interplay of the stamping feet (A. González, *Afro* 127-8).

The attached video contains a scene from a community fandango in Coatepec, Veracruz that eloquently depicts this practice in which the man appears to be making bold, if mock, overtures to the woman.

Possible stylistic markers of African influence on *zapateado* include posture and use of hips and shoulders. Some African dance traditions, such as the much-studied "Gahu" from Ghana, include movements that involve bending forward; this is rare in folklórico recreations of European dance during colonial times. While it is not always noted in *jarocho zapateado*, it appears, for example, in a traditional movement of the *son* "La Tuza," when the woman bends forward to chase the *tuza* (gopher) away. González elaborates:

European aristocratic dancers, restricted by garments that emphasized an upright posture, seldom stooped or bent forward... One way to identify African innovations in dance forms of the Americas is to note the change in posture... when Spanish dance styles were adapted by the African bodies of coastal workers, Jarocho and Chilena dancers bent from the waist in order to incorporate a greater range of torso movements. As rural performance styles are interpreted and restaged for concert performance, the body becomes upright once again. Deemphasizing the hips and maintaining an upright posture also assure that the chorus of dancers has a more uniform look—one of the qualities of folkloric dance that allows multiple communities to assimilate its aesthetic (*Afro* 115-6).

She also identifies the “aesthetic of cool” as a trait of both African dance and *son jarocho* (129). Similarly, Maestra Rubí Oseguera, of Tlacotalphan in the Sotavento, stresses the importance of ability to dance brilliantly for extended periods while maintaining control of facial expressions and body movements—even when the temperature is stratospheric, muscles are crying for relief, and perspiration is streaming—as a critical component of artful *jarocho zapateado* (personal communication).

A comparison of *jarocho* dance versus flamenco reveals that the former utilizes fluid movements of hands and arms far less than the latter. García de Leon speculates that this might have stemmed from colonial prohibitions (*Fandango* 54). However, *jarocho* dance does employ miming, as do West African dances. Examples are found in “La Tuza,” “La Iguana,” “La Guacamaya,” “El Torito,” “El Toro Zacamandú,” “El Butaquito,” “La Manta,” etc. The dancers bend forward, use props, and/or make arm motions to depict the theme of a *son*.

Another practice of Mexican *zapateado* is the treatment of the *tarima* dance platform with respect and honor. “In Afro-Mexican communities like Ciruelo and San

Nicolás, artesas (*tarimas* that are a little higher than *jarocho* ones) are named and marked to honor the local community” (A. González, *Afro* 121). A new *jarocho tarima* may be baptized even now, as I have witnessed at a Bay Area fandango. Similar practices, from propitiating dance spaces prior to community rituals with “libations,” to baptizing instruments, exist in West Africa.

### III. A. 5. Text

Samuel Floyd discusses strategies of signifying and call-and-response as codes within historical African American lyrics. Call-and-response, as mentioned previously, is often cited as an African attribute in *son jarocho* (A. González, *Afro* 117; Pérez Fernández, “*El son*” 42; García de Leon, *Fandango* 39). Signifying, however, has to do with a more subtly camouflaged, yet vast, set of procedures and treatments of text in African American musical contexts. Some of these pertain to *son jarocho*, as well: lyrics can camouflage special meanings, similar to double-entendre; they can carry coded messages; and they can be re-arranged to elude the comprehension of the uninitiated.

Signifying is figurative, implicative speech; it is a complex rhetorical device that requires...appropriate modes of interpretation and understanding on the part of listeners...Signifying is an art, in itself, to which anyone who has the ability has the right—but a right that must be earned through contest and conquest...the Signifying Monkey is Afro-America’s functional equivalent to Esu-Elegbara...<sup>24</sup> (Floyd, “Ring” 270).

*Jeli* signifying was noted above in the discussion of vocal delivery, and *son jarocho* is full of double-entendre. A related strategy is improvisation of lyrics, known in other

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<sup>24</sup> Esu-Elegbara is a West African deity/spirit and trickster who guards the crossroads between options and alternative meanings.

cultures as glossing, rapping, etc. In *son jarocho*, this is considered an expert practice. While it is open to anyone, in the Bay Area only a few versify. Discussion of text coding continues in chapter 4.

Various sources propose that certain words important to *son jarocho*—*jarana*, *fandango*, *bamba*, *zacamandú*, etc., resemble African words.<sup>25</sup> *Tarima* is a Spanish-Arabic term for platform. But conflicting theories abound. Perhaps the surest instances of African nomenclature in *jarocho* country are indisputably African names of towns—Mandinga, Mozambique, Yanga.

### III. A. 6. Ritual

*Acaso de una voz cautiva, del mandinga FANDA “convite”, pues que “por ampliación se toma por cualquier function de banquete, festejo u holgura a que concurren muchas personas...”* (Perhaps from a captive voice, from the Mandingan word “fanda” which means get-together, that by extension is taken for any type of banquet, festival or place where many people gather...) (Ochoa Serrano 75).

This quote suggests a direct link between the *fandango* ritual and Africa. Ritual elements of *son jarocho* are discussed throughout these chapters. However, ritual has long been so integrally linked with much African music and dance, that its spillover into aspects of the Mexican genre, especially the *fandango*, would have been natural.

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<sup>25</sup> See the section on African lutes to follow. Also, Ochoa Serrano 75 cites a Spanish dictionary from 1732 that defines *fandango* as relating to “the Mandingan word FANDA means ‘party with food and drink,’ and by extension refers to whatever function of banquet, fiesta or space where many guests gather;” scholar and flamenco expert Fernando Iwasaki in his blog “*Fandango llamo a Borondongo*” writes “*Fandango es palabra bantú, kikongo y namblú. Según las investigaciones de Fernando Romero en su Quimba, Fa, Malambo, Ñeque: Afronegrismos en el Perú (1988), cuando los negros esclavos hacían una tertulia la llamaban “ndonga”. Si la reunion degeneraba en una pelea se montaba una “fwandonga”, pero si se ponían a cantar la cosa quedaba en “fundungu”. El problema era la bulla, porque si la juerga duraba toda la noche se convertía en “fundanga”, que es como se conoce a la botellon en las junglas del Congo.*” ABCdesevilla.



Thus Nketia's admonishment is repeated:

...the identification...of African roots can be greatly enhanced if the field of inquiry is... extended to modes of expression and presentation as well as the values that govern... music making...our frame of reference must be the musical culture as a whole (334).

Specific anecdotes of early African syncretism with Mesoamerican ritual, documented decades ago, are noteworthy. Stevenson recounts a 1624 eyewitness Inquisition report about the Huastec *paya* ritual. Dedicated to a deity by the same name, the ritual venerates a pot made of colored feathers, said to represent the deity. "Balancing it, the Indians lightest on their feet whirled about, rattles in hand, dancing to the sounds of the wooden instrument called *teponaztli* by the Mexicans, and of an indigenous drum" (*Aztec* 232-3). Lucas Olola was a black slave who had come to lead the ritual in Panúco, in the north of Veracruz. The account maintains that he appeared entranced, fell to the ground, rose back up frothing at the mouth, and called himself seven gods. These very words could be used to describe affects of certain African rituals practiced within Voodoo and Santería. The pot plays a critical role in some African-Caribbean ritual traditions. As such, the *paya* would be especially suited for syncretic interpretation, and the question might arise, from which culture did this particular tradition—which the Huastecs said venerated Teem, their version of the Aztec Xochiquetzal—actually originate? Afro-Mexicans also became prominent in indigenous Veracruzán Voladores rituals during the colonial period.

Similarities between Afro-Caribbean and *jarocho* rituals are evident. Both may comprise extended, all-night, or multi-day durations. Song, poetry and dance are integrally linked, central procedures. Food and drink are served outside the ritual

circles, as an important practice. Customary orders of events build to peaks and then terminate according to whether participants have attained that for which they came—often an affective experience. Call-and-response, coded lyrics and rhythmic patterns, improvisation, and community-wide participation inhere. Historical chronicles even include balancing items while dancing (i.e., glasses of water on the head during “La Bamba.”) Of course, there are critical differences as well—instrumentation, names of deities, formations of dancers, initiation rites, spirit possession. Some attributes may have been disguised or transformed to address colonial conditions.

In order to clarify some of the similarities and differences between influences of separate cultures in a blended genre that transcends individual cultures, Mesoamerican contributions are considered next.

### **III. B. Indigenous influences in *son jarocho***

Academic inquiry into the nature of music and dance in the Americas at the time of the conquest has long encountered difficulties. Not only were Mesoamerican performative traditions primarily transmitted orally--thus leaving no known notated archive--but the fates of indigenous people at the hands of conquistadores and Inquisition authorities caused them to withdraw their ancestral traditions from public gaze. Thus, Mesoamerican music and dance from before early colonial times are not conclusively understood. Nevertheless, just as common sense suggests that African cultural practices informed *son jarocho*, it would indicate that local ones did, too.

The issue is complicated by the multiplicity of influences that may have modified its present-day arts from what they were before contact with Europeans; as

well as by the multiplicity of peoples and traditions that co-existed at conquest. The Aztec empire exercised rule over Veracruz lands at that time, but their subjects, who included Totonacs, Otomí, Popolucans, Huastec/Tenek Maya, and others, maintained their languages and customs. Nevertheless, certain commonalities of tradition extended throughout Veracruz and well beyond. Certain remarkably similar musical instruments were used in places as disparate as Central America and Northern Mexico; deities shared similar mythologies, visual representations, and/or nomenclatures; and many customs and beliefs corresponded in the same manner in which, say, branches of Protestantism do. Thus, scholars' findings about pre-conquest music often reference sources from across this wide area. Sources of data include early chroniclers' accounts of Aztec ceremony, indigenous performing arts that endure today seemingly devoid of much European influence, surviving indigenous instruments, and images from ancient buildings and statues.

References by scholars of *son jarocho* to Mesoamerican influences are generally limited to the resonance of certain topics within the lyrics. The paucity of other ascribed linkages may stem from the separation that indigenous groups historically maintained between their communities and those that included immigrants. Still, García de Leon ventures to list subject matter, dance routines, magic, rituals, beliefs about instruments, tuning, singing and apprenticeship as all reflecting syncretism of indigenous traditions with the African and Iberian in areas where indigenous settlements lay closer to those of others:

...Links are found in *son* with the mythology and popular magic of the region, that haven't always been there, being another of the products of *mestizaje*.

These elements reflect also the syncretism of the regional culture, from the seventeenth century, between the magic complexes of Mesoamerica, Andalusia and Africa, related also with a local rituality that, very possibly, made use of music and dance in curative magic... This promiscuous sublayer is greater in places where the indigenous world interacts more strongly with the mestizos, and appears in some animal *sones*... or in routines of dance and beliefs about instruments, tunings, apprenticeship of music and singing... (my trans.; *Fandango* 25-6).

More specific indigenous contributions to syncretized attributes are proposed here, in order of subject matter, dance style, rhythms, vocal delivery, and ritual traditions.

Where evidence of musical styling is available, it is mentioned in conjunction with these topics. However, some words by Ochoa et al., about indigenous Mexican arts, warn against becoming too comfortable with Western categories of analysis, recalling Nketia's advice.

Indigenous societies are very integrated, such that it is difficult to speak separately of music, dance, aesthetics, ethics, community roles and jobs as differentiated types of human activity or of life itself. They all interact at once. Many of the myths, customs and rituals from which dance, song and music derive, are based in essential cycles according to which are symbolized the codes of each social entity, and, therefore, are intimately related with activities, tasks, norms and values that characterize each society (my trans.; Ochoa et al., qtd. in Alonso Bolanos 127).

The respect that many Bay Area *jaraneros* have for indigenous cultural traditions goes beyond political posturing. Some dance regularly in all-night indigenous-based *mitotes*; some have traveled through Mexico to document endangered indigenous languages or attend secret rites; and many carry this level of commitment and respect into their practice of *son jarocho*.

### III. B. 1. Subject matter

García de Leon (25) and Delgado Calderón (53-4, 107-17) discuss the close connection of several *son jarocho* texts with indigenous Veracruzán folklore. They analyze “El Buscapiés” and “El Pájaro Carpintero.” The former *son*, in addition to lyrics that purport to fend off the Christian devil, references divine entities that manifest as thunderbolts and other aspects of nature in Mesoamerican beliefs. The latter lauds the woodpecker, who has many powers and meanings among the natives of the Sotavento. Other *sones* that also evoke matters of import in indigenous thought include the many dedicated to animals, features of nature or the landscape, such as “El Aguanieve” (fog, sleet) or “El Ahualulco” (confluence of rivers.) The animals include more birds—doves, magpies, quetzal birds, chicks, gulls, roosters, hawks, and macaws; reptiles and fish—snakes, iguanas, caymans, huiles; mammals—gophers, badgers, boars, bulls, burros; food and flora—coconuts, cinnamon, chiles, limes, lemons, oranges, coffee, flowers, sweet potatoes, syrup, guanábana; and magical creatures—mermaids, witches, the weeping woman, devil, cupid. It might be possible to trace the cupid and witch to Europe, or the mermaid and weeping woman to Africa. However, certain local fauna, flora and folklore are not found elsewhere—nor is music dedicated to these topics. Therefore, while the poetry with which they are lauded may take external forms associated with Spain, their underlying sentiment is likely related to Mesoamerican beliefs. Stevenson canvassed extant transcriptions and recordings of relatively early indigenous melodies, and many of their lyrics involved nature—rain, corn sowing, green corn harvest, cricket song, deer hunt, flowers,

landscape, frogs, foxes, turtles, herons, fish (*Aztec* 126-36). Others directly addressed deities. A group of Aztec poems dating as least as early as the sixteenth century and meant to be sung with drums and dancing, is the *Cantares Mexicanos*. The poems are structured in couplets, with verses and refrains. They engage in cryptic metaphor, and consistently reference a dual deity and other concepts of duality. One type of *Cantare* has been dubbed “tickle” songs due to their erotically charged, coded lyrics.

Similarly, erotic double-entendre and extensive metaphor inhabit many *sones jarocho*s, i.e. “La Culebra,” “La Iguana,” etc. This is taken up further in the chapter on dissimulation.

Others types of *Cantare* include “flower,” spiritual, and “war/epic.” The “flower” variety suggests into the flora and fauna of *son jarocho* and an ecological ontology of harmonization with nature. The spiritual *Cantares* are both philosophic and devotional, as spiritual songs are in most cultures; some *jarocho* verses also take these turns. The war epics recall European ballads and *romanzas*, as well as indigenous *areitos* and *mitotes* (Gómez 145-55). A few of the *sones* touch on heroic derring-do, although this often leads to humor or double-entendre.

### **III. B. 2. Dance styles of Mesoamerica**

While generalizations, by definition, risk essentialisms, so do all discussions of origins when they are not specifically documented. Thus, the dance styles practiced by indigenous Veracruzans at conquest ranged widely from astonishing athleticism and precision reported in Aztec dance by colonial chroniclers, to what may have been more subdued manifestations among non-dominant regional peoples. Early

chroniclers described Aztec dances that amazed them, taught in schools that demanded perfect execution to avoid the death penalty.

Recuperations and re-imaginings of such choreography have ranged from modern Aztec practice guilds (*calpullis*), to study of images from colonial and pre-colonial times. Art that only captures moments in time cannot predict much more. If *calpullis* have access to clandestine oral tradition, perhaps they are better able to approximate the original. In any event, their practices, when followed traditionally can have great affective utility, according to informants.

In some areas, indigenous traditions stayed alive among non-dominant peoples who, not presenting the threat to conquistadores that the Aztecs did, managed to maintain their practices. In the Sotavento, during colonial times, indigenous groups kept their distance from mixed-culture *castas*' settlements and customs. Today, just to the north in San Luis Potosí and Hidalgo states, villages of Tenek (Huastec) Maya and Otomí still practice ancient rituals at special sites. Bay Area *son jarocho* maestra/os Artemio Posadas and Dolores García have attended some of these occasions. Several of Posadas' research films feature Tenek women dancing in a dignified and subdued fashion focused, not on external athleticism, but rather on earth-directed, conscious footwork. Wearing traditional wrapped headdresses and *tejidas* (woven, crocheted and/or embroidered garments), they perform careful patterns of steps as men play flutes, drums and the occasional violin, enveloped in copious smoke of copal (a resinous incense used widely in Mesoamerica.) In the Bay Area, Posadas officiates at Dias de los Muertos rites in the Huastecan manner, with

similarly low-key footwork practiced meditatively to *aguinaldos* and *canarios*; traditional foods; a leafy arch to welcome deceased relatives; and plenty of copal. The footwork reminds me of some of the *danzas* practiced by the Yaqui of Northwestern Mexico during the Easter Matachines and other rituals that I have attended repeatedly. Culturally important processions and all-night vigils take place using staid, intentional earth-based steps in elaborate patterns. Conversely, the Yaqui's spring *Baile del Venado* (Deer Dance ritual), often performed in parallel with other *danzas*, features a virtuoso shamanic manifestation of the deer in an athletic performance accompanied by clearly indigenous, meterless flute and drum music.<sup>26</sup> Even though the Yaqui locations are remote from Veracruz, still some core beliefs span the gap. For example, the concepts of the *nahual*, of the corn deity Homshuk, of other deities, and of the significance of the four directions appear throughout Mesoamerica.<sup>27</sup>

A more explicitly Veracruzian example of “purely” indigenous dance is the ritual music and choreography of the *Voladores* (flyers) in Papantla. It is probably Totonac or Huastec/Tenek in origin, with indigenous music performed on flutes and drums for an extended period before several flyers, prepared through prayer, fasting and abstinence, ascend a several-story pole to ultimately fling themselves off backwards, heads down, supported only by a cord, held by their legs, that unfurls as

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<sup>26</sup> Yaqui dance served as Carlos Chávez' example of pre-conquest indigenous Mexican music exempt from European influence, during the composer's indigenist curatorial phase (*Mexican Music* n/pg).

<sup>27</sup> The Yaqui concept of *nawaal* is discussed in Edward Spicer's *The Yaquis*. Nahuals also inhabit epistemologies of Mayans throughout Mesoamerica and many other groups from at least as far south as El Salvador, to at least as far north as the Mexican-U.S. border, as María de Baratta and others have documented (*Cuzcatlán Típico*).



they circle toward earth.<sup>28</sup> Litanies are chanted to protect them, and a shaman dances atop the slender pole with steps and flute music reminiscent of the Yaqui deer dancer. While the *Voladores* perform for outsiders in exchange for donations, their ritual is deadly serious. Within a few days of our attending the *Voladores* in Papantla, Veracruz, in 2014, one of the flyers fell to his death.

The *tocotín* was danced at least as early as 1640 by indigenous artists in Mexico City, according to a chronicler that described it as “majestic and solemn.” The origin of this genre is a bit obscure, as it emerged vividly within syncretized colonial festivals during performances by indigenous *cabildos* (state-sanctioned cultural groups). But the chronicler, Cristóbal Gutiérrez de Medina, referred to the *tocotín* as “indigenous” (Stevenson, *Aztec* 204).

The first written reference to the *sarabande* (*zarabanda*) is claimed to have been in Panama in 1539. While this has not been confirmed, the second oldest archival source to mention the genre anywhere in the world is a six-strophe set of *sarabande* lyrics penned in Mexico in 1556 by Pedro de Trejo:

In Spain the earliest reference to the sarabande that (Sachs) could cite was a prohibition dated 1583. Diego Durán...mentioned it as a familiar dance in New Spain before 1579. For him it was the epitome of lewdness and only such an Indian provocation to vice as their “tickle dance”...could compete...(Stevenson, *Aztec* 226).

The tickle dance was the erotic category of the Aztec *Cantares Mexicanos*.

Chronicler Francisco López de Gómara described an Aztec dance in 1554:

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<sup>28</sup> While comprehensive evidence is scarcer than scholars wish, some musical traits of Mesoamerica are not found elsewhere. Examples include rhythmic procedures of flute variations that increase the length of phrases with each variation, a technique which Carlos Chávez called polymodal (*Mexican Music*), and ensemble procedures with independence of parts.

Many wore fitted featherwork hoods covering the head and shoulders, or else masks made to represent eagle, tiger, alligator, and wild animal heads. Many times a thousand dancers would assemble for this dance and at the least four hundred...At first they sang ballads and moved slowly. They played, sang and danced quietly and everything seemed serious, but when they became more excited, they sang carols and jolly tunes. The dance became more and more animated and the dancers would dance harder and quicken their pace...All those who have seen this dance say it is a most interesting thing to see and superior to the *zambra*...<sup>29</sup> (Stevenson 105-6).

Thus, examples of Mesoamerican indigenous dance, even those limited to the Veracruz region, ranged from highly concentrated, low-profile, patterned step-work to highly animated, athletic virtuosity. Of course, some indigenous groups preferred to remain separate from emerging cultures such as the *jarocho*. What, then, was their influence on *jarocho* dance? Chroniclers of the fandangos suggest that people attended from communities near and far (García de Leon, *Fandango*.) Any direct participation by indigenous individuals might have featured footwork that was lower-key than that of some Iberian and African dance styles. As with *cimarrones*, a desire not to draw attention on the *tarima* might have inhered, and colonial prohibitions may have contributed as well. Thus a connection could be drawn to *jarocho zapateado*, which, while physically demanding, is not extremely showy, and uses arm movements only sporadically.

Some Mesoamerican dances involve mimicry. The Yaqui Deer Dancer is a dramatic example, actually taking on the deer's persona. *Sones* such as "La Iguana," "La Tuza," "El Toro Zacamandú," "El Palomo" and "Guacamaya" use mimicry.

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<sup>29</sup> The *zambra* is a Moorish dance that excited Iberian audiences at the time of conquest, in which a barefoot dancer with finger cymbals and a flowing skirt performed sinuous movements of the upper extremities. The term is also used for an impassioned dance party.

Rubí Oseguera Rueda, *jarocho* dance *maestra* and anthropologist from Tlacotalpan, Veracruz, reminds her students that indigenous ontology valued male and female energies equally. This impacted dance practice: mixed-gender groups had to continuously circle each other to maintain equal circulation of the contrasting energies. This, in turn, she advises, is practiced in *jarocho* dances *de pareja* (in couples) for the same reason.

*Zapateado*'s most noticeable characteristic is stomping. The footwork of some *mitotes* and *danza* practiced today, as well as that of *tocotines* recorded in modern days, also includes stomping. The stomp dance for the Green Corn festival of the Southeastern U.S. indigenous groups may relate, at least indirectly, to the Eastern Mexican Green Corn rites. Of course, shoes, if worn in these dances, would not have been hard-soled. (Similarly, West African dancers often dance barefoot and some Spanish dance shoes are soft-soled.) However, Mesoamerican dancers often wore ankle rattles such as *ariles* (dried plant parts), *cascabels* (rattlesnake rattles) or dried cocoons so that their steady, relentless steps provided vigorous percussion.

### **III. B. 3. Rhythm and form**

Scholars have advanced divergent theories about rhythm in Mesoamerica before the conquest, but what we know is based only on what we have heard within the past century or so. Thus it has been impossible to generalize confidently. Mayan flutists, Papantla *Voladores* and Yaqui Deer Dancers play with exquisitely varied rhythms that defy metric classifications. In some ensembles, drummers and wind players do not seem to prioritize coordination among simultaneous expressions. An

1887 chronicler described an indigenous peyote *mitote* ritual in Nayarit as “*descompasado*” (meterless) (Ochoa Serrano 73). Yet Aztec pieces had long sections of repetitive rhythmic motives that astounded sixteenth century Western listeners.

Metered, “indigenous” rhythms today may employ compound duple; in the past straight duple may have been more prevalent due to ontologies that emphasized dualism (Stevenson, *Aztec* 29). However, a standard rhythm for the *huéhuetl* (vertical membranophone) was given at the head of Song XIV of the *Cantares Mexicanos*, circa 1551, by Don Francisco Plácido, an Otomí noble: quarter note – quarter note-8<sup>th</sup> triplets - dotted half rolled (Stevenson 47).<sup>30</sup> This could translate to what we know as duple, compound duple, triple, or triple meter with perfect prolation! *Jarocho* meters are predominantly compound duple, although some are straight duple. The former was typical of West Africa and Spain. While it may not have been as prevalent in pre-conquest Mesoamerica, it could have been at least familiar to indigenous ears.

Transcriptions made by Zapotecs in Villa Alta, Oaxaca, in the seventeenth century, of ritual indigenous “songs” (poetry with drum parts called *dij dola*) included syllabic notation for indigenous drum patterns. While we do not have a key to this notation, the patterns seem to correspond to the type or topic of the songs. This suggests that rhythm had specific affective or symbolic functions. A similar feature is found in the *Cantares Mexicanos* transcriptions. Both sources, in addition, possess a form that consists of stanzas, refrains and vocables, and which suggests that vocal

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<sup>30</sup> Stevenson suggests a possible Aztec notation, involving variables and inflections of Nahuatl words that may have signified rhythm and melody, that has not been fully deciphered or proven (*Aztec* 51).

improvisation may have been employed (Tavárez, 420-1). This recalls aspects of the format of *son jarocho*, discussed in the “Contour” section of chapter 4.

A practice observed by Julio Castillo and others among indigenous flute players, and employed by flutes in the Voladores and Yaqui Deer Dance rituals, is a variation form in which each succeeding repetition is more extended than the last. Stevenson’s discussion of similar indigenous variation procedures contains illustrative transcriptions (*Aztec* 131-8). Akin to some birdsong, these effects inhabit the improvisational unfolding of *son* procedures such as some *zapateado*, the ever-lengthening call-and-response section of “La Iguana,” and cadences that extend phrases to five measures from four, or nine measures from eight, as in parts of “El Buscapiés,” “El Coco,” “El Zapateado,” “El Toro Zacamandú,” etc. Vestiges of each of these procedures are audible in the rhythms of *son jarocho*. Chapter 4 elaborates on the impact that aleatoric procedures such as those that seem to inhabit some Mesoamerican music has on *son jarocho*’s form. Map 2 gives approximate locations of some of the peoples whose music is referenced in this chapter.

#### **III. B. 4. Vocal delivery**

Vocal style among indigenous peoples of colonial Mesoamerica varied according to singer, occasion, and piece. Declamatory vocals had their place, for example in celebratory epics, and sometimes involved call-and-response; yet, other singing was more introspective. Stevenson’s canvas of extant research tells of western Mexican shamans who sing in a dry, matter-of-fact, almost toneless style, and

Yucatec singing that was shrill at the time of conquest; of possible relevance to *son jarocho* are observations that melodic climax was not a goal (*Aztec* 70; 126-31).

As did *jeli* vocals, those of Mesoamerican *mitote* and Caribbean *areito* festivals often recounted historic, heroic deeds. These needed to be audible, although the amplitude would vary according to the character of the tale, venue, time of day that the story was recounted, etc. As in Africa, some genres required call-and-response between song leader and other participants. Indigenous melodic contour, on the other hand, seems to have involved more skipwise movement and a wider range than the African examples discussed above—and than *son jarocho*. But due to overlaps of delivery styles among contributory cultures, exclusive assignment of influence is risky. Rather, African, Iberian and indigenous procedures that varied by occasion and piece, mingled and modified each other.

### **III. B. 5. Ritual traditions**

Marina Alonso Bolanos writes, “For many scholars of music, the Indian is nearly synonymous with ritual” (my trans.; 129). She continues that while this may have caused indigenist researchers to privilege studies of relatively “pure” or religious music over that which bears mestizo elements, still, those indigenous ontologies that involve harmonization of the entire environment would have embraced mestizo elements. Indeed, “music” is not a separable concept in some Mesoamerican cultures, and it signifies merely instrumental expressions in others (Stevenson, *Aztec* 132). Ochoa Serrano locates ritual in his discussion of how prohibitions by church and state of popular music failed:

...the fairs...in the life and cultural world of rustics and plebeians grew and arose elsewhere, when the popular tunes, by contrast with the rationality usually associated with the era, were prohibited by the church and so drifted out into popular song. It was nothing less than another voice in the time of the FANDANGO that through the proliferation of different cultural mixtures came to fill the hole left by the abolished indigenous *mitote* (my trans.; 75).

The *mitote* was and is a Mesoamerican ritual tradition involving music and dance.

The word is *nahuatl* for “dance.” According to Ochoa Serrano, it resembled the indigenous *areito* ritual practiced in the Caribbean at the time of conquest. He invokes chronicler Fernández de Oviedo’s description of *mitote* as a way to remember ancient history through songs and dances. (Of course, the stated purpose may have been modified or coded for the ears of invaders.) Oviedo described *areito* as dance, song and drumming from which the performers were not to rest until the end of a piece. Others brought food and drink to the dancers during long stretches so they could maintain their steps. Sixteenth century chroniclers in southern Mexico described *mitotes* similarly, as dances to retelling of historical feats, winds and percussion. Ochoa cites another chronicle by José Ortega in eighteenth century Nayarit, of a *mitote* with meterless singing and mandatory all-night dance, fueled by peyote. The circle formation and relentless, sustained dancing are classic ritual elements. The endurance required in a *mitote*, or any all-night observance such as the Yaqui Matachines and other observances, recalls the periods of sustained intensity associated with ritual processes in other milieus, as will be discussed in chapter 4.

A *jarocho* fandango may last as long as a *mitote* or *areito*, albeit with respite for the dancers when others relieve them on the *tarima*. My experiences, as well as those of some of my informants, have involved opportunities to test endurance with

dancing and playing. Such rigor assists in arriving at a variety of affective states. An attendee of a fandango in Veracruz in 1911 wrote, “It is said that fatigue leaves us completely when we are in the middle of such bustle” (my trans.; qtd in *Fandango*, García de Leon 209). That is good to know, because as the twentieth century composer Gerónimo Baqueiro Foster wrote about his experiences of fandango:

In the mixed couples dances, children, adults and old people of both sexes participate, providing they have the ability and endurance necessary to show themselves...In the “de montón” (ladies) dances, interminable and even monotonous for the spectator, but of great attraction and enchantment for those who dance, only women take part and when the action builds to a peak, men and women of all ages form a long double line...only those who...have the extraordinary resistance to wait for the musicians to announce a change of dancers, decide to expose themselves to public scrutiny...(my trans; qtd. in García de Leon, *Fandango* 274).

The composer added that good dancers would dance “La Bamba” balancing glasses of water on their heads, without spilling a drop. This recalls the pre-conquest Huastec/Tenek *paya* ritual, practiced as far south as Zempoala, Veracruz, in which dancers balanced decorated pots on their shoulders to the music of the *teponahuatl*, rattles and chirimia. Much more could be and has been written about Mesoamerican ritual, and some will follow in future chapters, but much remains for future scholarly treatment—or, perhaps better, for protection from the outsider’s emic gaze.

### **III. C. Spanish influences**

While African influences are contested and Mesoamerican influences ignored for lack of evidence, Spanish influences upon *son jarocho* go unchallenged. Nevertheless, hard data demonstrating even Spanish influences is rarely given, and frustratingly scant.



The Spanish secular tradition in New Spain...left few tangible evidences. Even the manuscripts containing dances and instrumental music that do survive are in the hands of private collectors not disposed to share them with scholars. Colonial secular music, though conceded to raise the spirits of the population, did not warrant more than passing mention in early descriptions of life in the New World (Sheehy 17).

Nevertheless, scholars frequently list attributes of probable Iberian provenance that seem obvious: consorts of plucked strings, *zapateado*, and poetic forms such as the *décima*. The section on African influence offered multiple possible origins of the chordophones. *Zapateado* and poetic forms are now considered, along with rituals, titles and texts, and musical structures.

### **III. C. 1. Dance**

The same problems arise when attempting to trace the origins of dance as when tracing the origins of music and instruments. Several theories about the origins of *zapateado* exist. Of course, Andalusians incorporated it into flamenco; but the flamenco's roots include Moorish stomp dance, and may extend at least as far East as the Punjab's elegant, classical *kathak* stomping genre or as far west as Mexico. While *kathak* stomping is barefoot, it is fast and rhythmic; the origins of Andalusian gypsies likely extended to India. Some of *kathak's* upper body movements are visible in those of flamenco dance, as are some North African dance moves. As noted before, stomp dancing is also found in indigenous communities of Eastern North America, and many indigenous cultures of the Americas provide percussion through dance steps by wearing ankle rattles. Northern Europeans performed stomp dances too; they may have been the earliest to use shoes with sonorous heels. Renaissance Spain had intimate political and familial ties with Northern Europe. Similarly, the rise of tap-

dancing in the colonial United States, as a response to prohibitions on African percussion, paralleled the maturation of *son jarocho* and flamenco. Thus, clues about the genealogy of *zapateado* are varied.

During the mid-twentieth century, composer Gerónimo Baqueiro Foster made investigations into the history of *son jarocho* that led to a partial genealogy of its dance forms. He wrote that he was incited by the *sones*' "hallucinatory" rhythms, unique call-and-response melodies, modal chords of "oriental" origin, and structures that provided frameworks for improvisation (my trans.; qtd. in García de Leon, *Fandango* 284). He traced genres that led from the *zarabanda* to the *seguidilla* to *fandangos* and *boleros*, to *jarabes* and *sones*. While some of these dances were of Spanish origin, Stevenson demonstrated that the *zarabande* came from the Americas, and there is evidence that *fandango* as a dance did too:

According to the *Dictionary of Authorities*, Madrid, 1732, the fandango is a "dance introduced to Spain by those who have been in the kingdoms of the Indies" (my trans.; Ochoa Serrano 75).

Nomenclature aside, did these dances resemble what we know today as *jarocho zapateado*? As the term *zapateado* refers to dancing with shoes—*zapatos*—Thomas Stanford gives a clue, citing a mid-eighteenth century Spanish *Diccionario Real* that describes the steps of the *canario* in a way that evokes today's *zapateado*: "it is danced making sound with the feet, with short violent movements" (my trans.; *El Corrido* 20). The genre came to Spain from the Canary Islands, which were inhabited by people related to the Berbers before coming under Spanish dominion, and from which expeditions may have come West even before Columbus (Van Sertima 3-20;

Tharoor “Muslims”). *Canarios* were stylized as courtly dances in Europe as early as the sixteenth century. Today’s courtly *canario* conveys aspects of *zapateado* as seen in the Sotavento. Heels keep the beat. *Canarios* became popular in Eastern Mexico, even becoming part of indigenous rituals there. Yet, can *canarios* explain all of *zapateado*?

In early eighteenth century Veracruz, during in Holy Week observances, *danzas de cascabel* or *zapateado* took place in churches; these included *zarabandas*, *chaconas* and *seguidillas*. García de Leon suggests they issued from the Spanish peninsula, although at least the *zarabanda* appears to have originated in the Americas, as discussed above (*Fandango* 30).

Spanish folk dances were many, and, like the *canario*, some became stylized for courtly settings. The *seguidilla* (sometimes called *sevillana*), the *fandango*, the *bolero* and the *jota* are well known. Spanish *seguidilla* steps are more flamboyant than the footwork of *jarocho*; the Spanish *bolero* even involves jumps. The Aragonese *jota*, while employing movements more angular than those of Andalusia, uses castanets with associated expansive arm movements not common in *jarocho* dance. The *fandango*, again, may have originated in the Americas, but ample room remains for research on the origins of Andalusian dance as it extended to Mexico.

### **III. C. 2. Poetry**

Daniel Sheehy provides an incisive glossary, with examples, of classic Spanish poetic forms found in *son jarocho*, including common variations and rhyme schemes. The reader is encouraged to reference it; a brief list is quoted here:

Verse structures utilized most frequently are the cuarteta (four-line stanza), quintilla (five-line stanza), sextilla (six-line stanza), décima (ten-line stanza), and seguidilla. Most verse lines tend to be eight syllables in length. The seguidilla involves the alternation of seven- and five-syllable lines (5).

Elsewhere, he elaborates:

Among the *jarochos*, *copla* does not necessarily imply the classic secular *copla* form...It is used to refer to any traditional verse form except the *décima*...The *seguidilla* is identical to the *copla*, with the exception of the number of syllables per line (112-3).

Most of these forms involve rhymed couplets. The chain verse seen in “La Iguana,” “El Coco,” “El Jarabe Loco,” “El Toro Sacamandú,” and “La Rama,” consists of an extended and unspecified number of these couplets (113, 122). García de Leon says:

*Seguidillas*, as evidenced in Cervantes and other classics of the Golden Age, were made to sing in dances of diverse types. This poetic form is also widely used in the *villancico*, from which, in both sacred and secular variants, derived many of the topics of Son Jarocho.<sup>31</sup> The form(s), four or seven lines, are in “great” *sones* like “La Bamba” and “El Pájaro Cú,” or in tunes adapted to the octosyllabic, such as “La Manta” ... (In) “El Butaquito,” the *seguidilla* tends to the seven-syllable quartet, in the form of a line with seven syllables followed by one with five; to this last is added a five-syllable expression such as “Cielito lindo” or “Paloma mía” (my trans.; *Fandango* 47).

However, some of these poetic structures predate Cervantes. Couplets are found in the Aztec *Cantares*, although their defining feature is not assonance, but rather metaphor. The Andalusian/Moorish *muwashah* and *zejel* of medieval times inspired a variety of classical Spanish forms. Passages from Julian Ribera illustrate:

The poet who is said to have brought the Andalusian metric system to its greatest perfection was Ubada bin Ma-As-Sama, who died in 416 A.H... Among them are *muwashahs* with refrain and stanza, which extended to ten and eleven syllables... that is to say, a long refrain with varied rhythms and a stanza with subdivided ternary element and independent rhymes in each

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<sup>31</sup> One wishes the esteemed author had given some examples.

strophe, beside the part whose rhymes are the same throughout...Thus a lyric system of *zejels* and *muwashahs* had been developed at the beginning of the fifth century of the Hegira (eleventh century A.D.)...from the quatrain *aaab*, the simplest pattern, to the pattern *fgfgfgabcde*...the *zejel* as a type was accepted by eminent poets, who, though quite able to write in perfect classic form, yielded to the temptation of following the native Spanish pattern...This would tend to prove...a strong popular current of development paralleled later in Christian Spain in the ballads.

Ibn Hazam...describes the groups that collected in the highways to hear men and women of little talent tell more or less fictitious stories...(they) could recite hundreds of compositions...the desire to copy these popular poetic forms reached such a pass that there were writers who imitated in *zejel* rhythm the children's song of Malaga. The fashion of writing this type of popular song spread even to the Moslem and Jewish women...Even the Mozarabic Christians copied these songs...The passion for versifying communicated itself to the most religious men, and ascetics and mystics of Andalusia wrote in this vein...(128-34).

This traces both Moorish influence on Spanish verse forms, and the practice of using them to versify epic tales, reminiscent of *jelis*, *mitotes* and *son jarocho*. Moorish forms continued to be visible in written Spanish music of the time of the conquest:

The placement of musical phrases in the *Cantigas*<sup>32</sup> is the same as in the *Cancionero de Palacio*,<sup>33</sup> that of the *zejel* of the *ab xxab* model... It is impossible that this surprising constancy of pattern should have been a mere chance...If the remaining technical elements of the *Cantigas* ...correspond to their structural pattern...we may infer that Alfonso gathered together the wealth of the Moslems of Spain, and held to the Andalusian traditions (192).

As with *son jarocho*, the strophic structure of the Moorish-influenced *muwashah* and *zejel* provided platforms for numerous modifications and embellishments:

...the pattern of the primitive *zejel*, *aaab*, was subdivided, making complicated cross-rhythms, reaching sometimes stanzas of eleven or twelve or even fifteen lines in which various distinct rhymes are alternated... All this had to be done

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<sup>32</sup> The *Cantigas de Santa Maria* are 417 monophonic songs notated in medieval neumes, attributed to King Alfonso X of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and/or his court musicians, some of whom were probably Moors.

<sup>33</sup> The *Cancionero Musical de Palacio* is one of the few extant renaissance codices from Spain, containing secular songs but often with devotional texts.

with due regard to the melodic phrases. Perhaps the music followed in this same way (136).

The strophic *romanza* was possibly Spain's most popular musical genre during the sixteenth century. An evolution of earlier Mozarabic forms, it used poetic structures found in *son jarocho* as well. Its simple pattern facilitated adoption by all classes, and suited the telling of epics.

...the *romance*...from...medieval forms (was) the most serviceable to renaissance expression...examples in the *Cancionero de Palacio* show its more primitive form of four short phrases...the same music served all strophes. In the sixteenth century the first stirrings of expansion are seen in the repetition of the last line to give finality to the whole...It even found its way into the churches... as the *villancico*...the refrain...was not necessarily of the same proven quality, but it was lively, flexible and capable of adopting the...*seguidilla* (to) compete with the *villancico* (Livermore 60-1).

This evolution from *zejel* through *romanza* to *villancico* includes forms familiar in *son jarocho*. Some romances and *villancicos* in Spanish renaissance codices are polyphonic, while they maintain the poetic forms. This is unlike *son jarocho*.

However, *villancico* came to refer to a variety of genres, both sacred and secular, that emerged in Mexico. These evolved into *tonadas* and *tonadillas escenicas*, and, as Thomas Stanford argues, even the *corrido*. Various scholars have linked all of these genres to *son jarocho*, without giving concrete examples. The matter is complicated by overlapping terminology. For example, *seguidilla* refers to musical, dance and poetic structures. Table 5 attempts to capture and resolve some of this.

**Table 5. Spanish poetic, musical and dance forms**

Form	Poetic Scheme	Moorish?	Mesoamerican?	Dance/Poem/ Music?	Jarocho examples/ Comments
Cantare	abab (some)		Yes	P/D/M	Some rhyme, but not main structural device
Zejel	ab xxab; aaa, bbba, ccca, etc	Yes		P	L 250: Petenera, Cantigas, Yes estribillos/strophes
Copla	Abcb			P	El borracho
Seguidilla	abcb 7/5			D/P/M	7 syllable lines followed by 5 syll. Lines
Quintilla	ababa or ababaa			P	El Pájaro Cú El Balajú
Sextilla	Ababab			P	
Chain verse	ababab or abcdbbeb etc.			P	S 113: Iguana, Coco, La rama, Jarabe loco, Toro zacamandú,
Décima	abbaa coddc etc.			P	El zapateado, El fandanguito, El carro viejo
Romanza	Abcdd			P/M	L60-1: Estribillos came later; Una montaña pasando 154 CPM
Villancico	ababac,dededc, ccccacdc; abcb			P/M	Nativity, Pastorale, refrain, La Rama
Muwashah	fgfgfabcde	Yes		P	Less popular, more complex contemporary of <i>zejel</i>

Of course, any poetic form may be set to music, so table 5 is somewhat conceptual.

Note the similarities between the schemes for the first half of the *décima* and the *romanza*; the *zejel*, *sextilla* and chain verse; the *cantare*, *copla*, *villancico* and *seguidilla*. The *villancico* has elements of the *zejel*, as do the *décima* and *romanza*.

However, for all of the schemes given, there were accepted variations, so it is impossible to generalize about genealogies based on rhyme schemes alone. What is possible to deduce, however, is that cultures stemming from Africa (the Moors), Iberia, and Mesoamerica all esteemed organized verse, and perhaps this commonality made it a natural choice in *son jarocho*.

### III. C. 3. Ritual

The ritual of Spain is as vast a topic as that of Africa or Mesoamerica. It ranges from Moorish and Jewish rituals practiced prior to 1492, through the Catholic and Protestant rites and celebrations, to rustic secular practices, to gypsy traditions. Of course, Catholic ritual settled into Veracruz during colonial times, in many syncretized variations such as Tlacotalpan's Candelaria, Xico's Mary Magdalen, and Santiago Tuxtla's La Rama. These are some of the many occasions during which *son jarocho* came to be practiced. However, a few anecdotes that link Veracruz fandangos to Spanish customs are perhaps less well known.

In 1825, traveler Eugenio de Aviraneta visited Alvarado, just south of the port of Veracruz on the tropical coast. From his diary:

I thought I was back in Spain...because they spoke pure Andalusian with that lisp they have,<sup>34</sup> and walked with the swaggering gait...The site was full of new travelers, in an ebb and flow of entrants and exits. Musicians appeared with their guitars, mandolins, violins, tambourines and *sonajería* (rattles). The dances were held in the square, the same as in Andalusia. *Fandangos*, *boleras* and other relaxed dances like the *zarabande*, etc.... (the scene is lit by candles sheltered in huge glass chimneys from Germany to protect them from the night sea breezes; young men are playing card games)...At midnight the dancing and gambling were in their full splendor and the crowd numbered maybe five hundred... the music and dancers stopped to give themselves half an hour to rest. Groups of dancers retreated to the woods to sit on tree trunks, others drank lemonade, orangeade, sangria, pure wine or pulcre, sold at stands with cakes and shortbread...Women perspired as if they were in a steam bath, and yet the fresh breeze was blowing...their shirts and dresses were soaked. After an hour of rest, they returned to dazzle with their dance and castanets. At two a.m. I got tired...(my trans.; transcribed in García de Leon *Fandango* 127).

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<sup>34</sup> The lisp is still common to speech in the Sotavento. Rather than a lingual "s" or "th", however, it is an almost mute glottal "s".



Another traveler to Veracruz, Ernest de Vigneaux, included these passages in his 1854 journal:

We were in the middle of a forest; the tops of the giant trees and the graceful palm fans cut across the blue background of the starry sky; above some cabañas with pointed roofs, one was lit; below its porch three young men on a podium sang to the sound of the guitars, and some pairs of both sexes, half covered in silk, velvet and muslin, with their hair tousled, were dancing passionately. An enthusiastic crowd grouped around, some standing, others on mules or richly adorned horses that were panting and snorting as if they were participating in the general intoxication. Inside the cabaña, liquors of cane, manioc and corn flowed abundantly to keep the sacred fire burning. There is in the Museum of Luxembourg a painting by Giraud that represents some Spanish rustics in a fiesta; if were added to this ardent pantomime... woods and the prodigious effects of the rosy light of the torches in the middle of the night, it would be a perfect sketch of the most animated scenes that I have witnessed...(my trans.; qtd in García de Leon 163-4).

These descriptions of *jarocho* fandangos evoke ritual with imagery of all-night impassioned dancing, traditional beverages, perspiration, and torchlights. Both writers relate their Veracruz experiences to Spanish ones. Many varieties of folk song and dance in the Iberian Peninsula, differentiated by region, combine dance, song and chordophones in occasions like fandangos. The term *sarao* was used in Spain; a similar flamenco term came to be *juerga*. During and after Moorish rule, *zambra* and *leila* referred to parties involving song, dance and music:

The Moriscos also continued to celebrate their own *zambras* (festivals) and night revels...*Leila* was the name given by the Moriscos to their festivals or dances that took place at night. The custom of celebrating music festival was so deep-rooted that it persisted until the expulsion of the Moors, in spite of all the royal prohibitions against the celebration of both *zambras* and *leilas* with Moorish instruments...Even in the middle of the sixteenth century the Arabic musical tradition still held strongly among the Moriscos ... The Christians...heard the Moors playing and singing for five or six hundred years. Although they made it a rule not to learn Moorish songs, how could they distinguish, when half asleep at night, whether a serenade in the street

outside were sung by Christians or by Moors?...the Moors sang ravishing lovesongs...(Ribera 144-8).

Even pious Muslims in Spain appreciated music's ability to invoke transcendent affects:

... music was one of the media employed by the Islamic mystics in the Oriental districts, especially among those who had reached the degree of purification where music was intended to aid in withdrawing the soul from the influence of the senses and freeing it from bodily fetters so as to commune with the Divine. This was attained by the emotion aroused by music. These mystics affirm that there was a prophet among the Israelites who prepared himself to receive the celestial revelations by "listening to music sung by sweet and lovely voices" (Ribera 134).

Thus, along with many ways of celebrating aspects of the sacred in syncretic rituals, secular fandangos employing ritual practices of Spain as well as Africa and Mesoamerica also found in *son jarocho* an important focal point.

### **III. C. 4. Subject matter**

Baqueiro Foster maintained that the following *sones* originated in Spain: "El Cascabel," "La Morena," "El Fandanguillo," "La Petenera," "La Llorona" and "La Bruja" (García de Leon, *Fandango* 296).<sup>35</sup> Others have contended the same of "La Manta," "El Balajú" and "Los Panaderos." Frustratingly, the composer did not explain how he came to these conclusions. "La Llorona," which he attributed to Spain, is now considered to have arisen at least in part from pre-conquest mythology in this hemisphere, although other parts of the world, including Africa, have similar folk tales.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> As the oldest *sones*, the composer cites "El Cascabel," "La Morena," "El Fandanguillo," "La Petenera," "La Llorona," "El Coco," "El Camote," "La Bruja," "El Cupido" and "Chiles Verdes."

<sup>36</sup> The Crying Wind is a folktale which originated in Dahomey and Togoland in Africa was introduced to the United States by Black Americans who were brought to America as slaves. As an oral story which changed in the retelling, it describes the wind as a wailing woman that roams the waterways in

A cursory look through a variety of materials and texts of Spanish popular song reveals texts that are similar, but not identical, to texts in *son jarocho*. Parts of “El Balajú” closely resemble parts of “Mambrú,” which became popular in Europe in 1709 after a false report of the death of the Duke of Marlborough (John Churchill) in the Spanish War of Secession. Beethoven used the latter’s melody in Wellington’s Victory and gringos know it as “The Bear Went Over the Mountain” and “For He’s A Jolly Good Fellow.” While a few lyrics of “El Balajú” are similar, the melody and harmonic pattern vary significantly from Mambrú, and the many *jarocho* verses that have developed deal with the passions and illusions of life at sea.

El Balajú

*Balajú se fue a la guerra  
Y no me quiso llevar  
Anda con Dios Balajú  
Que tu me la has de pagar.*

*Balajú siendo guerrero  
Se embarcó para la España  
Llevaba unos prisioneros  
Porque ya tenía mas maña  
Viajando en el mundo entero.*

(Balajú went to war  
And didn’t want to bring me  
Go with God Balajú  
For you’ll have to pay me for it.

Balajú being a soldier  
Embarked for Spain  
Bringing some prisoners  
Because he already had more ability  
Traveling the entire world.)

Mambrú

*Mambrú se fue a la guerra  
Qué dolor, qué dolor, qué pena  
Mambrú se fue a la guerra  
No sé cuándo vendrá*

(Mambrú went to war  
What grief, what grief, what pain  
Mambrú went to war  
Don’t know when he’ll be back again)

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search of her murdered children. They were drowned by the ocean, who is also a woman, and scattered throughout the world. The wind fights desperately with the water trying to retrieve her lost children.

Note the *copla* followed by *quintilla* verse form in “Balajú.”

The title of a *villancico* from Andalusia, “Tilín Tolón”, serves as a refrain for the Veracruzán “Tilingo Lingo.” A rustic Spanish Christmas *jota* is called “El Butaquito,” as is a *son jarocho*. “La Manta Zamorana” is a *jota* that was recorded in the early twentieth century, suggestive of the *son* “La Manta.”

“La Morena” is a popular *son jarocho* in minor key, thought to originate in Iberia, where the title meant “Moorish woman.” In Mexico it refers to “dark woman” and is a compliment. The theme is part of a complex that inhabits *romanzas*, *villancicos* and *zarzuelas* of Spain, and is mixed with imagery of Virgin Mary and heaven, as well as impassioned or disastrous love. Some sample lyrics from various sources are juxtaposed on the next page. First are verses from the *son jarocho*, then from a *zejel*<sup>37</sup> found in the renaissance codex, *Cancionero de Palacio*. This is not intended to prove a direct relationship between the compositions; however it does demonstrate commonalities within the complex of themes involving Moorish women and extending to the Virgin Mary, who appears as a dark woman in many medieval Black Madonnas, the Candelaría of the Canaries, the Virgin of Guadalupe, etc. A Spanish Christmas *villancico* from around 1702, still popular today, is called alternately “Arre Mi Morena” or “Ande Marimorena.” The expression “Marimorena” may signify the dark Virgin, sometimes called “María Morena” in Spain; both are somewhat interchangeable with any dark woman named María. This recalls *son jarocho*’s “La Morena” lyric in which a dark woman asks to be taken to meet the

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<sup>37</sup> Ribera explains how this *zejel* arose from earlier Moorish compositions on the same theme (162-7).

Queen of Heaven (the Virgin Mary.) The *morena* remained a popular theme throughout nineteenth century Spain, appearing in *zarzuelas* (light comic operas) and operas. The layers of meaning for such a complex of terms can go to extremes: the term “marimorena” is now jargon for a barroom brawl, possibly pursuant to a tavern once named the same.

La Morena <i>son jarocho</i> verses (Sheehy 1979 and Seattle Project)		<i>Cancionero del Palacio</i> and related sources (Ribera 1929, 162)	
Una morena me dijo	(A morena told me	(Who had to bring you	Quien vos habia de llevar
Que la llevara yo a ver	To take her to see	To God	Oxalá
A la reina de los cielos	The queen of the heavens	Ay Fátima Fátima)	Ay Fátima Fátima
Que quería conocer	Who she wanted to meet		
Y después de haberla visto	And after having seen her		
Que la volviera a traer	To bring her back		
Una morena me dijo	A morena told me	(3 morenas I loved	Tres morillas me enamoran
Que la llevara a Jamapa	To take her to Jamapa	in Jaen	en Jaen
Y yo le dije morena	And I told her, morena,	Asha, Fátima & Marién	Axa y Fátima y Marién
Mejor te llevo a Xalapa	Better I take you to Xalap	3 such beauteous morenas	Tres morillas tan garridas
Allá te compro gardenias	There I buy you gardenias	Were going to pick olives	Iban a coger olivas...
Y tus arêtes de plata	And your silver earrings)	Were going to pick apples)	Iban a coger manzanas...
Adiós me voy llorando	Goodbye, I go weeping	(That beautiful Mooress	Aquella mora garrida
Penas y desdichas mías	My pain and wretchedness	Your love gives me pain	Sus amores dan pena a mi vida
Pero me voy acordando	But I go remembering	... I may not forget them	(Ribera 1929,165)...
Que te he de ver algún día	I have to see you sometime	They capture my future	Cautivaron mi ventura y mi bien...
Aunque de vez en cuando	Even if once in a while	and well-being	
Morena del alma mía.	Morena of my soul		
Estando yo recostado	Reclining		
A lo fresco de la arena	On the cool sand		
Oi la voz de un pescado	I heard the voice of a fish		
Que le dijo a la sirena	Saying to the mermaid		
Cuánto trabajo ha pasado	How much work takes place		
Por amar a una morena	To love a morena)		

Spanish folksong and *son jarocho* lyrics share other themes: maidens bathing at rivers; sirens of the sea giving advice; adulterous love affairs; love lost; and observances about diverse components of society—Moors, Indians, Guineans/Blacks, cowherds, regional stereotypes, rustics, and *guapos* or *catrins* (aristocratic colonials.)

Just as parts of the *son* “La Morena” recall parts of the *zejel* “Las Morillas,” procedures of borrowing and modifying have existed throughout European music history. The *ensalada* even appeared in Spain during the sixteenth century as a genre that patched together borrowed elements. García de Leon similarly linked verses from Lope de Vega and Count Olinos to “El Aguanieve,” and found a verse in “El Balajú” that relates to an *entremés* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca (47-51). Verses from Juan del Encina’s “Baile de los disparates” and Quevedo’s “Las armas y las galeras” appear with a few changes in “La Bamba.”

This brief look at linkages between texts based an ocean apart reveals how monumental a comprehensive effort to trace them all would be. It is beyond the scope here. Mariana Masera sums this up:

...the danced and sung poetry of Veracruz and the Caribbean, where today there are still true vestiges, albeit appropriated and re-invented by popular culture, of the Golden Age (of Spanish poetry include) texts that portray the first encounters between cultures and different social classes, like the...remains of comedies in refrains of the *jarabe loco*, or the fragments of old *romanzas* included in *sones*. All these elements “reflect the formation of a popular literary commerce” and a shared mentality and civilization in all that which was the Spanish colonial empire (my trans.; 11).

### **III. C. 5. Harmony, rhythm and melody**

The history of functional harmony clearly signifies Europe as its birthplace. No alternatives have emerged, although parallel organum has inhabited many musical cultures, including some in Africa. *Jarocho* harmonies tend to the modal, with Andalusian/Moorish sounds of the Phrygian, Ionian and Hypodorian, sometimes mixing relative major and minor keys in characteristic “*menoreado*” procedures. Still, the most frequent *jarocho* progressions are V-I, IV-V-I, and V-IV-I, the core of

functional harmony. García de Leon gives more information about harmonic schemes (10). Rhythm, however, is more complex to trace. Did Spain add unique offerings beyond those of Africa and Mesoamerica? The twelve beats of flamenco *palos* recall the twelve pulses of West African bell patterns, but the former are largely based on symmetrical sesquialterae, in which the rendering of six beats shifts between two groups of three and three groups of two, more akin to procedures from North Africa than those of West Africa. Moreover, as noted above, some flamenco styles apparently developed concurrently with *son jarocho*, rather than earlier. One category of *palos* is called *idas y vueltas* (goings and comings)<sup>38</sup> because they arrived from the western hemisphere, in forms such as the *milonga (habanera)* and *guajira*. Like flamenco, the notated music of renaissance Spain featured extensive use of sesquialtera; this rhythmic trait is common in *son jarocho* as well. The *idas y vueltas* were many.

In travel journals transcribed by García de Leon, European informants derided the vocals and instrumentals of Veracruz *jaraneros*, calling them “broken screams,” “pesimissimo” (very appalling), and so forth (see table 1.) Some of this was due to vocal delivery style and instruments designed according to acoustic goals that differed from those of European instruments. In addition, half-flatted modal tunings, particularly of the third and seventh degrees, sometimes heard in *son jarocho*, may

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<sup>38</sup> Composer Gerónimo Baquero Foster wrote of the fandango that it metamorphosed rhythmically and harmonically into derivative *sones* that adopted rhythms such as *habanera* in *sones* of Veracruz and polka in El Aqualulco (García de Leon 2006, 296).

have been adopted and/or adapted from Moorish melodic procedures that translated early to New Spain; they have been noted in indigenous music, too.

Although the genre is traditionally transmitted orally, musicological procedure includes consulting scores if they exist. A few notated manuscripts survived in Spain from the time of the conquest, with more compositions joining the archive later. Yet these are unsatisfying. Not only does musical notation lack precision in prescribing performance practice, but the extant scores do not seem to resemble *son jarocho* in substantive ways. While recordings are another musicological source, they capture only performance practice of the past century or so, and editorial choices are ever speculative. Scores and recordings of works by Juan Encina, his contemporaries, and later Spanish composers reveal performing forces differing so greatly from a *conjunto jarocho* that any relationship between the genres is hard to detect. Complexities of modal harmony, non-episodic phrasing and polyphonic treatment increase the dissimilarities.

#### **D. Summary**

Data supporting profound influences on *son jarocho* from Africa, Mesoamerica and Spain are as provocative as they are elusive. Difficulties abound in tracing positive genealogies, as they do in most musical traditions. However, when attributes do not have alternate explanations, their provenance seems more reliable. Thus, the African influences include polyrhythm, signifying, bell patterns, and second-beat entrances; also likely are through *jarana* construction and aspects of vocal delivery. The genre reflects Mesoamerican traditions such as a preponderance of



topics dealing with nature, extensive use of metaphor, and all-night *mitotes*. Spanish contributions include poetic forms and harmony. Conversely, extended musical ritual, use of chordophones, stomped footwork, and humorous double entendre transcend these individual constituent cultures, in all of which they are found.

Although many puzzles about origins remain unsolvable, the inputs of *son jarocho* had to have transcended multiple cultural boundaries. In today's exceedingly multicultural Bay Area—in which some ethnicities confront systemic conditions that are far more difficult than others do<sup>39</sup>—issues, needs, and desires do reflect those of colonial Veracruz. Techniques of transcendence are useful. This nuances the next chapter's exploration of how *son jarocho*'s techniques invoke, and outputs include, transcendence--of everyday states of mind, of oppressive conditions, of self-imposed limits, of societal habits. The genre has been able to transcend centuries and borders in part because the need for its ways of transcendence is not unique to a region, culture or era.

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<sup>39</sup> Many chronicles of the oppressions in Colonial Veracruz, and of diversity and inequality in today's San Francisco Bay Area, appear in the Inquisition Archives and histories of Veracruz by Garcia de Leon and others, as well as the daily newspapers of Oakland, Berkeley, San Francisco, Fremont, Richmond, and San Jose. The interviews in chapter 5 touch on these issues as well.

## **Chapter IV. Practices of transcendence: magic in disguise**

The artistic inputs of *son jarocho* transcended cultures, and the outputs suggest transcendence, as well: Bay Area *jaranera/os* report affects such as “the beauty,” “my medicine,” “cleaned out,” “joy.” Practitioners from elsewhere describe fandango as “a peak experience” or “...in certain moments, an effect tied to the religious” (my trans., García de Leon, *Fandango* 26). Certain ritual practices are useful for producing these kinds of affects. *Son jarocho*’s component cultures employed a number of them, such as embodiment, performativity, and universal participation, which respectively enable resistance to oppression, identity transformation, and community cohesion—survival skills for diverse peoples facing adversity. Exploration of how the techniques merged into the genre follows.

### **IV. A. A reminder about working definitions**

Chapter 2 reviewed a body of theory on definitions of ritual, magic, religiosity, liminality, and related terms. Because these terms are understood differently according to context and perceiver, I join with the scholars who conclude that working definitions should correspond to those preferred by the individuals who employ them. While I attempt to use such terms in broad ways that signify form or process while leaving function—goals and affects—to those reported by informants, sometimes informants in this study do not employ these terms at all. For example, as the interviews in chapter 5 will show, Bay Area *jaranera/os* may refer to happiness, medicine and beauty as motivations for participation, but not as the product of ritual procedures, rather as the product of fandango, or music, or participation. This may be

in part because the experiences are not enhanced by structural concepts of Western academia, in part because such matters are private or proprietary, or in part because the nature of the experiences is ineffable. Still, participants' reported affects are vivid enough that some degree of explanation here may help readers to understand how they might come to be so.

#### **IV. B. Syncretized rituals and *son jarocho***

How did ritual or religious traditions of the peoples that contributed to *jarocho* culture merge into *son jarocho* practices? Although the genre presents as secular, a more appropriate term might be secularized, due to the cultural complexities and prohibitions resident in colonial Veracruz. Examples of ritual or religious syncretization in colonial and present-day Mexico follow below, with mention of similar practices among contributory cultures and proposals about how they apply in *son jarocho*.

##### **IV. B. 1. Examples of religio-ritual syncretization in New Spain**

People in the Sotavento boast mixtures of African, indigenous Mesoamerican, and Spanish blood. Yet nothing was new about the multicultural imperatives gave birth to proto-*son jarocho* in sixteenth century Veracruz. Transculturation had characterized Veracruz and its environs for millenia. The Olmecs held power during pre-Christian times, and they may possibly have included Africans as a priestly class or as visiting merchants.<sup>40</sup> After the Olmecs, the Sotavento area of Veracruz served as

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<sup>40</sup> Van Sertima and a group of scholars that has supported his work have presented a number of facts that suggest this possibility, as pointed out in chapter 3. This group is opposed by other scholars who

home to Mayan, Totonac, Popoluca, Aztec, Toltec, Mixtec and other cultures that intermingled. While their rituals and deities may have had different names, they also possessed similarities. Additional parallels appear between pre-conquest Mesoamerican and African cultures. The black Ek Chuak, a Mesoamerican merchant god, resembles a merchant god from West Africa (Van Sertima 99-101). Both cultures venerate the birth of twins as portending supernatural significance. The African goddess Yemaya resembles a pre-conquest Taíno deity, Atabey, and the Petenera siren of Spanish/Moorish repute. The root syllable “na” attaches to words referencing shamanism in both Mandingan and Mesoamerican languages. Such similarities help syncretism to operate.

Prior to the arrival of the Spaniards, the Aztecs extended their imperial regime over the neighboring Mesoamerican peoples, implementing syncretism strategically. “Like the Romans, the Aztecs adopted and venerated...the gods of the peoples whom they dominated. This resulted in a constant interaction of the styles of chants and dances...” (Kurath and Martí 15).

During the sixteenth century, *conquistadores* and Inquisition figures strove to impose their culture upon indigenous and African-descended populations around the Caribbean rim. In response, these populations devised adaptations. Syncretism of old and new practices spawned Cuban Santería, Brazilian Candomblé, Haitian Vodou, and numerous other observances. Contrary to the Aztec strategy, Africans superimposed Catholic saints' names and faces upon their own deities, somewhat

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protest that the evidence is circumstantial. As with musical origins, the burden of proof is difficult to achieve on either side.

melding the identities. African dance and drum practices continued to inform these diasporic religions. However, modifications impacted not only deities, but music and dance dedicated to them: celebrants may have come from different African cultures, periods of lapse in practice may have passed, and instruments may have had to be invented using materials available in the new environments.

In addition to his work on the history of African Mexicans, Aguirre Beltrán collected histories of religious syncretism in several areas of the Sotavento. A passage in his *Pobladores del Papaloapan* tells how divine Mesoamerican, African and Catholic forces coalesced in Cozamaloapan, a town on the Papaloapan River south of Veracruz (145-8). The town is named for indigenous goddess *Ayauh Cozamalotl*: *Arco Iris* in Spanish, Purple Rainbow in English, in Mayan *Ixchel*, all related to Chalchiuhtlicue who ended the Fourth Sun of Aztec and Mayan belief systems, with a deluge. Her earthly manifestation is a rainbow; her powers link the creative and destructive potential of rainfall with birth and death. Another of her names in Cozamaloapan is *Ayotzontli*, translating “Four Hundred Turtles,” symbolizing fertility (mother turtles lay many eggs.)<sup>41</sup> The water referents of her names relate to lifegiving rain, destructive floods, and the breaking of the water in giving birth. Prior to Cortez’ arrival in Veracruz, a temple for this goddess stood in Cozamaloapan, adorned with a beautiful fresco of a rainbow stretching from the town to Mexico City (where the seat of Aztec power was then located.) When the Catholic priesthood arrived, they realized that in order to woo and subjugate the indigenous residents, they would have

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<sup>41</sup> This parallels deities of the Garifuna and turtle masques found in south-Central Mexico.

to associate the Virgin Mary with *Arco Iris*. For this, they designated the beautiful and benevolent Virgin of Soledad, whose image came to be superimposed on the rainbow in the town chapel. She was now to be propitiated to stop the “floods of idolatry.” It is interesting that the African *loa* (transcendent being) Erzulie, like Yemaya, shares lore with this goddess: a beautiful woman and mother; she too is associated with the Virgin of Sorrows; and she is known by some as “The Siren,” a water image. This suggests ties to the son “La Petenera” from within both cultures, and the Taíno goddess Atabey. *Arco Iris* is pictured in the Dresden codex along with the Mesoamerican rain god, Tlaloc, and the black Ek Chuak, god of merchants.

In turn, Ek Chuak, who is black and sports gear that resembles an African merchant god, was syncretized as a Black Christ in the Sotavento town of Otatitlan (Aguirre Beltrán, *Pobladores* 159-62). The town was a major trade center and Ek Chuak, thus, the original tutelary deity. When the missionaries arrived, they had proposed San Andrés as the new patron saint. However, a statue of a Black Christ appeared at an indigenous man’s home in a reputedly miraculous way, and thus became the preferred choice to superimpose upon Ek Chuak.

In the case of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the divinity came to resemble the indigenous population. Daniel Sheehy writes of a lyric in the famous *son jarocho*, *La Bamba*, which translates “I like dark women since I have learned that the Virgin of Guadalupe is a dark woman” (Sheehy 335).

These examples have illustrated how deities from the component cultures might merge, and Chapter III demonstrates how musical attributes combined in *son jarocho*. How did ritual practices syncretize?

Many examples arose throughout the hemisphere in response to colonization. Puerto Rico's holiday *aguinaldos* are accompanied by strings that pluck African bell rhythms (Quintero Rivera 2004). The Garifuna, who comprise African, Caribe and Arawak blood, devised *dugu* funeral rituals that fused African musical styles and ancestor invocation with indigenous Caribbean *areito* durations, deities and contours. The West Mexican Yaqui juxtapose, in their Easter *Matachines* ritual, the pre-conquest Deer Dance alongside a unique enactment of the Easter story that involves the entire community's participation throughout Lent. These processes contextualize those that took place among the cultures that encountered each other in the Sotavento.

Threats and prohibitions from Church and State in colonial Veracruz meant that cultural survival, for the subaltern, depended on creative solutions. Dissimulation of source practices was useful. Moreover, similarities among traditions of Africa, Mesoamerica, and Spanish refugees contributed to their ability to merge. For example, the cultures shared the tendency for music, dance, spirituality and even magic to be woven seamlessly into quotidian activities. Just as the Mesoamerican calendar suggests of this hemisphere's practices, rituals of West African Mandinga, Ewe, Fon, Dahomey, Congo and Yoruba cultures involved the whole community, pervaded the calendar, and were thought to influence destiny.

Traditional African cultures did not fragment the components of daily life from one another. Music accompanies all aspects of an individual's life, and

the community participates freely in almost all musical celebrations. Such events generally involve the kinetic and visual arts...Traditionally, there was no separate notion of art from spiritual celebration or social entertainment in Africa. Music has always been a mixture of sacred and secular ingredients. While one person might be enjoying music, dance and colorful masking from an aesthetic perspective, another may become filled with the holy spirit, while yet a third might experience the event primarily as a festive occasion (Hester, *Africa* 33).

Thus Nketia has emphasized that African music has to be studied in context:

Such an integrated approach is of particular importance...first because African tradition already emphasizes ‘meaning’, and second because of the close identification of music with African social life... (23).

The same was true of Mesoamerica:

...in the case of Mexican institutions...it doesn’t suffice to indicate that music is related with its context, rather, it’s necessary to understand in what way it is: The indigenous towns are very integrated societies, making it difficult to speak in particular of music, dance, aesthetics, ethics, social norms and of occupations and community ideas...as differentiated areas of human activity and of life itself...(my trans.; Ochoa et al. qtd. in Alonso Bolanos 129).

Ochoa Serrano, just referenced, suggests that fandango replaced the pre-conquest *mitote* ritual, which he likens to pre-conquest Caribbean *areitos* and Peruvian *taquis* in which music sounded alongside dance, history-telling, and war rituals. His book describes the eighteenth century in Mexico as:

“a magical life in the country and suburbs...Fandango through the mixing of cultures came to fill the void left by the indigenous *mitote*” (my trans.; 74-5).

Pre-conquest *mitotes* served, at times, as war dances, but more often as rituals for recounting history. This implies the secular. However, *mitotes* also sometimes involved drinking a special pulque-like substance called *puzcua* or ingesting peyote (72-3). Those that still take place in remote areas or in diaspora often include all-night drumming and dancing, and, at times, ingestion of ritual substances.



Renaissance Spain, too, teemed with pre-modern, Moorish-influenced traditions and hourly masses, daily confessions, frequent Saint's Feasts, and weeks of celebrations for Christmas and Easter, blending the sacred and the secular into the quotidian.

Some new syncretized rituals are less essentially musical, but they shed light on the utility of syncretic practices today. Many people in Mexico have customarily practiced home-based devotions, and many of these have included not only Church saints, but syncretic deities, according to social need. Recently, sizeable groups have taken up veneration and propitiation of narco-saints such as Juan Malverde, a martyr to the drug wars whose powers include robbing from the rich to give to the poor. *Santa Muerte* is ritually treated similarly to Catholic and syncretic saints, but her skeleton form better recalls the ancient mother goddess Coatlicue (a skull-and-serpent clad fertility and death deity.) She resembles the Catrina skeleton known throughout the country as a symbol of the ever-present reality of death. While prohibited by the Catholic church, figures like Juan Malverde and *Santa Muerte* have arisen in response to the ravages of the drug wars, of climate change and of capitalist farming practices on the *campesino* culture of self-sufficient family farming—ravages that rend families when the men leave their *ranchos* to seek work in cities or as *jornaleros* (migrant day workers) north of the border. The *Santa Muerte* movement has grown to the extent that a monthly pilgrimage to the barrio of Tapatío in Mexico City draws thousands who dress miniature skeletons in finery according to the season and pray at a central shrine after smudging with cleansing herbs. Nobody collects money for a priesthood;

however, a ritual practice is to give to others in need encountered during pilgrimage. Musicians accompany these gatherings with traditional Mexican folk music, as free-will offerings. A follower of *Santa Muerte*, who had lost her home to Hurricane Katrina, commented that the practices helped to reduce her anxiety and increase her happiness. When asked why so many people are willing to risk the wrath of the Church, she ventured, “These people have been let down by the existing system.” (Sarah Borealis, personal communication).

Similarly, explanations of the efficacies of ritual in multicultural or diasporic situations are suggested in Max Weber's observation that:

In the midst of a culture that is rationally organized for a vocational workaday life, there is hardly any room for the cultivation of a cosmic brotherliness, unless it is among... (the) economically carefree. Under the technical and social conditions of rational culture, an imitation of the life of Buddha, Jesus, or Francis seems condemned to failure for purely external reasons (357).

Perhaps Weber's “carefree” referred to privilege, but a pancultural perspective allows for motives other than material gain. The non-attachment of his prophets might, in fact, produce freedom from care in anyone not driven by greed, regardless of economic means. This seems to be the case with a number of my informants who practice *Santa Muerte*, African ritual dance, or *son jarocho*.

Another noteworthy, new and syncretic movement is that of the Zapatistas of Mexico's Lacandon Mayan Chiapas state. Since 1994, they have organized around methods of non-violent resistance, espousing indigenous Mayan beliefs on the importance of the environment, and the rights of women. Usually reclusive, they do seek media attention to publicize need for reparations for centuries of marginalization

and environmental damage. As with *Santa Muerte*, Vodou practices, and narco-saints, the media have not always presented the Zapatistas in a positive way. Conversely, rituals of resistance and transcendence that present as not openly threatening the status quo may have unique efficacies. *Son jarocho* may be a workable example.

#### **IV. B. 2. Religio-ritual practices that may have transferred**

During the sixteenth century, most Africans arrived in Veracruz by way of Cabo Verde island, the “factoría,” that processed slaves for trade, west of what is now Senegal. Those who arrived were Bran, Gelof, Biafaran, Mandingan, Berbesi, and a few from as far away as Mozambique. By the seventeenth century, more came from farther southeast, Angola and the Congo (Aguirre Beltrán, *La Población Negra*).

With so many African cultures represented in New Spain, summarization of their ritual practices is impossible here. A few examples must suffice. Some rituals’ objectives included possession by ancestors and tutelary spirits, community catharsis, healing, and prognostication. Certain features filtered more overtly into Caribbean traditions than they did into *son jarocho*. For example, in Cuba, Arará and Yoruba populations were able to forge musical rituals that propitiated African deities from regions of what is now Nigeria. In Haiti, Vodou practices resemble Dahomey, Fon and even some Congo rituals. In Puerto Rico, slaves developed ostensibly secular drum and dance practices such as *bomba* from diverse traditions of origin.<sup>42</sup> The African/indigenous Caribbean Garifuna created syncretized systems. These involve

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<sup>42</sup> Aspects of Puerto Rican *bomba* and *plena* practices resemble *son jarocho* practices.

extended, spirited *punta* drumming as well as reverence for indigenous spirits of fertility and longevity, symbolized in turtles and other natural creatures.

However, elsewhere Church or State stepped in to prohibit drumming—what is now the United States, Trinidad, St. Kitts, Barbados, Jamaica, as examples. In Veracruz, *jaranero* Patricio Hidalgo states, hand drums were taken away from people of African heritage by the Inquisition:

...All rhythms once played by hand were transferred to the *tarima*... In other words, rhythms once performed on hand drums were reconfigured to the lower body. The legs and feet replaced the percussive movement of the hands... (Díaz-Sánchez and Hernández 192).

As noted in Chapter III, some of the rhythms also appear to have been transferred to the *rasgueos* (strummed patterns) of the *jaranas* and the plucked lines of the *requintos*.

What characterized Mesoamerican ritual? As with African practices, a comprehensive answer to this question would be beyond the scope of this study, but a few attributes that may have been syncretized into *son jarocho* are given here.

Objectives of rituals ranged from remembering history and tradition for community cohesion, to good harvests and hunts, to healing and prognostication, and beyond.

*Mitote* was widespread at the time of conquest, and involved all night circle dancing, participation by shamans, and recounting of historical epics (Ochoa Serrano 72-3).

Aztec rituals, described by the sixteenth century Spanish chronicler Bernardino de Sahagún, might last all day, all night or longer. They were sacred in character, propitiatory, and involved music and dance. Some culminated in human sacrifice, suggesting that at least some participants may have entered ecstatic or

trance states. The roles of the musicians and dancers were crucial; if they erred in the execution, they could pay with their lives (Kurath and Martí 15; Stevenson *Aztec* 118).

Later, Spanish missionaries prohibited practices that the Church considered unholy. However, the clergy tolerated music and dance as long as it appeared to represent mere entertainment; they believed it improved indigenous morale (Stevenson 121, 165). Thus, aspects of ritual traditions survived, even if their signifiers had to be dissimulated. In this regard, Ochoa Serrano holds that fandango was a colonial replacement of *mitote*, suggesting that shifts in musical style, allowable dances, and economic structures had led to the replacement of a quasi-secular term with an ostensibly fully secular one (75).

What attributes characterized both Mesoamerican and African rituals? The use of drums, rattles and voice were commonalities, as was danced percussion. Extended durations of sustained intensity and special roles of foods and libations characterized many. Some of the objectives were similarly transcendent—healing, or possession by tutelary spirits (African *loas* or Mesoamerican *nahuals*), for example. Community participation was relatively universal. Both cultures venerated ancestors and twins, and approached divinity in a variety of forms. So, a basis existed for finding ritual structures useful to combinations of Africans and Mesoamericans.

What of the colonizers? Ritual practices of Spain at conquest included those associated with Catholicism. In addition to masses, feast days, and pilgrimages like

those to Santiago Compostela, Spain harbored cults of flagellants, the Inquisition's gruesome *Autos-de-Fe* and taxing blood purification procedures.

Moreover, hundreds of years of Moorish rule left indelible traces. Within the Church, a unique liturgy of idiomatically embellished Mozarabic chant had arisen, cherished by its adherents to the extent that duels arose it when Rome decreed that its official version should be used. Just as flavors of the modes of North African music found their way into folk genres both across the Strait of Gibraltar and via *gitanos* (gypsies) from the east, so did aspects of ritual practices. These ranged from *zar* healing rituals, to Islamic prayer cycles and holidays. Whereas some branches of Islam prohibited music, many Sufi rituals included music, dance and chant: the *sema* worship service, the *sama* whirling dance, and the *dhikr* repetition of God's name. The *dhikr* and another ritual called *zar*, while prohibited, are still practiced in Egypt (one of the reputed origins of Spain's gypsies.) *Zar* involves extended drumming and free-form dance, animal sacrifice and possession by jinns for healings.

Just as scholars see similarities in flamenco and *jarocho* dance, similarities inhabit their rituals. Whereas flamenco did not formalize until the nineteenth century, proto-versions existed from the time of the Inquisition, when Andalusian gypsies, Moors and Sephardic Jews were persecuted. Need for catharsis fed into its development, parallel to that of *son jarocho* across the Atlantic. Both become popular means of resistance and transcendence, employing improvisation, danced percussion, deep lyrics, and strings. Félix Grande discusses transcendence in flamenco, when he

discusses García Lorca's musings about the genre's supernatural agents, the angel and the *duende*. What is the *duende*?

Maybe this name fits: the feeling of death, which is what we ultimately perceive when we truly look through the finite eyes of life, and what wraps all major art works in anxiety and majesty. The *duende*, Garcia Lorca points out, “does not come if you do not see the possibility of death.” But, of course, this does not suggest giving in to fatality: that would be suicide, not art; it means to convert fatality into the feeling of death, and moreover to fight, and moreover to fight with entitlement with the *duende* awaiting in the depths of despair, in exaltation, in a ceremony of glittering consent with the shadow. For a moment, finitude becomes immortality... *It has to do with achieving a moment in which all the world's clocks are suspended*, overwhelmed by the sage dragged out of the fragile human creature, a sort of prodigious, fleeting and memorable forgetfulness...The Spanish tradition is that of a people where “the ultimate value is courage in the face of death.”... (“In the world, only Mexico can hold hands with Spain” notes Garcia Lorca)... And if we venture a guess, the greatest percentage of our art concerned with death has been produced in Andalusia... “The great artists of Southern Spain, gypsy or flamenco, singers, dancers or players, know that no emotion is possible without the arrival of the *duende*” (my trans. and ital., 92).

Many Spaniards came to Veracruz from Andalusia, but no *duende* receives credit for propelling *son jarocho*. Still, lyrics to *sones* such as “Buscapiés” and the aforementioned lore about “leaving one's soul on the tarima” are related ideas, as is the suspension of linear time discussed below in the section on atemporal contour.

García de León offers insights on how religiosity, magic and ritual practices of component cultures syncretized within *son jarocho*:

Digging into *sones*' deepest meanings...reflect(s) the syncretism of the regional culture that took place in the seventeenth century, including Mesoamerican, Andalusian and African magics that correlated well with local ritual practices that very possibly used music and dance in healing magic...syncretism... appears, in some *sones* about animals, to be associated with ancient founding myths of the region...with dance routines, and/or with beliefs about the instruments, tunings, learning

music and singing...*El Buscapies* has linkages with love magic, with the devil in his colonial form, and even with some characters from indigenous and coastal mestizo myths...who become lightning and meteors or...eagles; ie, the complex of beliefs...associated with...the coastal geography and climate...The ritual dynamic of fandango manages to create, at times, an effect tied to the religious, but perhaps it is more the product of certain harmonic accumulations...the varied historical accumulation that marked the passage of many cultures through the main port of New Spain and the way the influences penetrated into its interior region... (my trans.; *Fandango* 25-6).

So, influences from both Africa and Mesoamerica included music, dance, deities,<sup>43</sup> transcendent objectives, extended durations, community-wide participation, food and drink, and ontologies in which these practices informed the quotidian. Spain and North Africa brought musical stylings that were already syncretized, secularized genres of resistance, and the *duende*. All of these attributes transferred into *son jarocho*, as will be pursued below. Combined with the musical idioms described in chapter 3, they comprise a wealth of ingredients for syncretization.

#### **IV. B. 3. Syncretized ritual and *son jarocho***

The genre's presence alongside, if not within, rituals occurs in customs like La Rama, the Candelaria festival, Three Wise Kings celebrations, Dia de los Muertos, baptisms, funerals, and weddings, any of which may harbor elements of syncretization. Fandango, however, is a ritual centered on *son jarocho* practice. The term has a variety of definitions. During colonial times in Mexico and Alta California, it referred to any of a number of parties or celebrations that involved

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<sup>43</sup> The term "deities" is problematic as it suggests a Western perspective. In African and Mesoamerican ontologies, the spirits of ancestors, environmental forces, and emotional energies might better describe some of the agencies revered.



music and dance. From the eighteenth century in the Iberian Peninsula, it indicated a triple meter dance that is speculated to have originated in Mexico (Ochoa Serrano 75). Other meanings of fandango involve its etymology. A Mandingan word from West Africa, “fanda,” translates as “convite,” a fiesta with food and drink, so the term may have descended from African origins (Ochoa 75; Iwasaki n/pg).

Fandangos may coalesce as regularly scheduled occasions, as special parties, as impromptu events, or as traditional adjuncts to religious festivals. “Flash” humanitarian fandangos in the Bay Area include those organized to entertain *jornaleros* (day workers) who immigrate for work to support their families; usually, food is donated to them as well. As publicity could endanger the *jornaleros*, it is avoided. Thus, there are elements of dissimulation, resistance and solidarity in these events. Less subversively, Bay Area *jaranera/os* may offer “fandanguitos” at community gardens or hospitals. Larger, more public humanitarian fandangos support widespread needs, such as natural disaster relief, immigration reform, support for child refugees or missing children. Of course, many fandangos exist simply for enjoyment. Most are free of charge, but a few suggest optional free-will donations to help cover expenses. Some *son jarocho* workshops are offered on a similar basis. In the Bay Area (and many other locations) a norm is that all are greeted with respect. The only hierarchy is the tacit authority that defaults to those considered the most accomplished artists, teachers and organizers.



Fig. 11. Musicians around *tarima*. Coatepec, Veracruz's *Estrella de Oro* 150-year-old cantina.

The sequence of a Bay Area fandango might proceed as follows. While it may take place indoors or outdoors, in a home, studio or park, the center of the space is always the *tarima* (low wooden platform for one to several dancers.) Many of the attendees, who dance, sing and/or play instruments, stand in a loose circle around the *tarima* with their *jaranas*, *requintos*, *quijadas*, *marimbas*, violins or harps. The leaders of the events, often known as *maestra/os*, stand together close to the *tarima*. Participants who choose not to play or dance, but rather to watch and *convivir*, may sit in chairs surrounding the musicians' circle, near the food and beverages. This circular arrangement recalls some Native American and African rituals.

Participants may wear traditional *jarocho* clothing such as white hats and red kerchiefs, or handmade blouses called *tejidos*, full skirts and shawls (*rebozos*); others wear modern party clothes. The process of gathering traditional garments is in itself a kind of initiation, as they are not available at the mall. Those who like to dance usually wear shoes with heels that sound, but I have seen sandals and sneakers on the *tarima*. Many attendees bring offerings of food or drink. People eat whenever they

are hungry. The etiquette feels casual, not strict. There is no procedure of initiation into the common practices, other than “watch and learn.”<sup>44</sup>

The time could be morning or evening, winter or summer; lights may be bright or low, electric or flame; festive decorations appear often but not always. While a starting time may be published, the music rarely begins then, for an important activity is the *convivencia* (conviviality) that precedes musicking, as people greet each other and exchange small talk and jokes. When the leader judges the time to be right, he or she will pluck the opening notes of a *son* on the sonorous *requinto* (melody lute) or harp. The first selection is usually “Siquisiri.” After several verses of instrumental introduction, the leader begins to sing lyrics heralding the occasion, greeting the participants, and asking for God’s blessings.

*Muy buenas noches, señores, señoras y señoritas...*  
(A very good evening gentlemen, ladies and misses...)  
*Vengan muchachos y muchachas, Que la música las llama...*  
(Come young men and ladies, Let the music call you...)

The singing of this *pregonero* (caller) is declamatory, loud and forthright. Another singer answers, usually echoing the *pregonero*, in call-and-response fashion but with individual melodic styling. “Siquisiri” may hold the only reference to the divine for the rest of the fandango, in which lyrics, laced with coded messages and double-entendres, address features of the environment, local fauna, treacherous lovers, seafaring, politics, lust, race and dance. After the *son* has been going several minutes with improvised melodies, rhythms and lyrics, dancers (women, in the case of

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<sup>44</sup> Of course, one may attend workshops to bootstrap oneself, and after a few months, a fandango newcomer may receive tactful suggestions from a maestro for making their presentation more artful.

“Siquisiri”) from the circle venture onto the *tarima*, stomping their feet to provide the familiar *zapateado* percussion line. If there is a dance leader, she will choose a partner for the first dance. After several more verses, other dancers begin to relieve those on the *tarima*. The norm is that when petitioned, a dancer, whether male or female, must cede his or her place. Thus one *son* may accompany five to ten pairs of dancers.

The first *son* may last up to thirty minutes or more, after which comes a break to tune, take refreshment, and greet new arrivals. Five or ten minutes later, the lead musician, or *maestra/o*, will initiate the notes to another *son*. The fandango is under way, repeating the pattern just described for four to eight hours. Apart from the opening *son*, there is no set order or duration for the occasion. *Sones* are selected according to the current inspiration of the *maestra/o* and other participants. Often heard in the Bay Area, however, are “El Balajú,” about life at sea and war; “El Pajaro Cú,” about nature and love,” “La Guacamaya,” about a beautiful endangered bird,” “Colas” about humorous and troubled relations between spouses, “El Ahualulco,” a polka-like travel song about river life, “El Cascabel,” a love serenade, and “La Morena,” about the difficulties of loving a beautiful dark woman.<sup>45</sup> (These descriptions do not do justice to the many layers of meaning of *son* lyrics, which is discussed presently.)

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<sup>45</sup> Other *sones* I hear less frequently in Bay Area fandangos include “La Iguana,” “El Coco,” “Los chiles verdes,” “Las poblanas,” “El Trompito,” “La Tuza,” “El Toro Sacamandú,” “El Gallo,” “Los Enanos,” “El Aguanieve,” “La Manta,” “La Candela,” “El Camotal,” and “El Jarabe Loco.”

Attendees are not pressured to participate, but those who try find willing guides among the more experienced. Overcoming shyness gradually is one of the ways in which participants experience transcendence and *communitas*. Even the tolerance and good humor that accompanies innocent errors (I have stepped off the *tarima* by accident more than once) strengthens bonds.

By the time four or five *sones* have finished, several hours have passed and attendance has reached its peak. The ambiance has undergone marked transformation. The temperature rises, people are bathed in perspiration, alcoholic libations are consumed by some. Playing and dancing have lasted for extended periods of sustained intensity, and volume and spirits are high. *Jarana* players and *zapateadistas* have dissipated anxieties about their skill levels as they have entrained into the repetitive rhythms and strumming patterns of the *sones*, borne along by the surety of more senior artists. I have experienced, and some of my informants have similarly shared, a phenomenon that recalls a quotation by Alfonso Lingis about repetitive actions being easier to maintain and thus possible to continue much longer than existing physical constraints might suggest:

...every purposive movement, when it catches on, loses sight of its telos and continues as a periodicity with a force that is not the force of the will launching it and launching it once again and then again..." (30).

This "magic" phenomenon lends an ecstatic element at this point in the fandango.

This is when a climactic "Bamba" or "Buscapiés" comes. The performance of these *sones* is particularly strenuous, exceeding at times the aerobic to the point of the anaerobic.

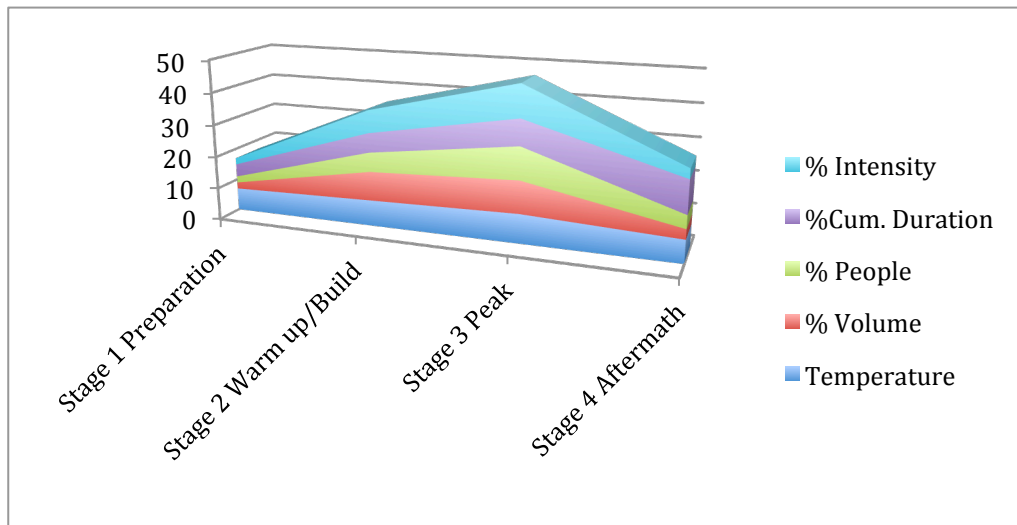
After a climactic *son*, a number of participants may leave, but others remain a few more hours. If the event lasts long enough, they play *sones de madrugada* (early morning) such as “Las Olas del Mar” and “Las Poblanas.” These slower, more introspective works befit the intimacy occasioned by communal catharsis and exhaustion. Musicians who stood throughout most of the fandango, may now play and sing while sitting. They may improvise verses with a deeper, sillier or randier character. The fandango ends when all of the guests leave. As this approaches, people become more reflective in their interactions, or perhaps simply share ecstatic, exhausted transcendence in *communitas*.

This chapter began with the question of how *son jarocho* practices enable transcendent outputs. Some clues came from examples of syncretized religio-ritual practices, religio-magical-ritual practices of the genre’s component cultures, and connections of *son jarocho* with avowed ritual customs. In outlining a generic Bay Area fandango, the ebb and flow of intensity over time emerged, covariant with a number of factors in the fandango space. Table 6 gives a visual approximation of this, recalling observations of trance music traditions by scholars such as Racy, Fikentscher, Becker and Sylvan. Yet:

It is not enough, after all, to identify a practice as ritual—as Foucault, that consummate ethnographer of Western culture, knows full well. It is only when the differences between the rituals are described that we can begin to understand what each kind of ritual enables, and how it does so (Asad, 89).

Other factors that characterize fandangos and related practices of *son jarocho* also resemble ritual means. Some happen outside of the formal event horizons of rituals,

**Table 6. Conceptual model of stages of fandango intensity**



but still within the community, to fuel affective outputs. As Nketia and Ochoa advise, it is impossible to study the music of Africa and Mesoamerica without the context of their cultures. What, then, are other techniques that fuel *son jarocho*, its practitioners, and its occasions? There are many, so it helps to group them according to three kinds of outputs: resistance, identity transformation, and *communitas* with agency.

#### **IV. C. Dissimulation in practices of resistance and transcendence**

Many practices of the colonial Caribbean rim, from Santería to *son jarocho*, were fashioned in order to resist oppression, to confound colonial hegemonic attempts to override traditional ritual from their cultures of origin, and to preserve the outputs of those traditions. As oppressive activities still exist in the U.S. and Mexico, so does the need to resist and transcend them. Along with direct, public activism, resistance may take forms of dissimulation—verbal coding, masquing, concealment and syncretism. Practices that purport to be pure entertainment may serve as vehicles for

dissimulated resistance through messaging, mocking, or disguising the maintenance of traditional practices. *Son jarocho* is no exception.

#### IV. C. 1. Verbal Coding

Techniques of verbal coding include code-switching, layered meanings, improvisation and melodization. In the Bay Area *son jarocho* community, most participants speak English, but Spanish is primarily used at fandangos, workshops, and similar occasions. It functions as a code that signifies community identity. Moreover, use of Spanish acknowledges respect for *son jarocho*'s origins. Lyrics are generally in Spanish, but some *jaranera/os* occasionally interject Nahuatl and other Mesoamerican-language words and phrases into *sones* or conversations, as a coded nod to indigenous values.

*Jarocho* lyrics also encode through carrying several layers of meaning. In addition to a *son*'s title theme—an animal, a lover, a fruit, a place—may be bawdy *doble sentidos* (double-entendres) arising from humorous resistance of hegemonic restrictions. Sometimes yet a third layer of significance is political. “El Guapo” is a *son* about an archetypal character in Mexico. The title may refer to a handsome fellow, a dandy notorious for romancing women, or a *tipo* who thinks he is handsome because he has money and power. Some of the lyrics, as translated by Daniel Sheehy, are:

Along this straight street  
They say they have to build a bridge  
With the ribs of a handsome man  
And the blood of a valiant one.



Along this straight street  
A hawk is lost  
Who says he has to take  
The swallow from her nest.

Along this straight street  
They invite me to have lunch  
Buzzard preserves  
Lizards in pipian sauce (348-9).

These *versos* may have as many interpretations as there are singers and listeners.

“Along this straight street” is an organizing line that begins each verse; thus it gathers importance as the *son* continues and recalls the Moorish *zejel* form. Yet, is the *son* about a straight street? Or is it about a street that appears to be straight in the eyes of the beholder—the law, the Church, or the moral community of peasantry on the ground? Is a street a street, or a course of action? In the first *verso*, a bridge is to be built. This could signify enhanced community relations, or enhanced public safety, or cultural blending with the associated losses of tradition, or capitalistic modernism that mostly benefits the hegemony. The raw materials are the ribs and blood of a handsome man. Does handsome mean good looking? Does it mean morally upstanding? Does it mean shallow? Is the man of Church, State, or the people? Is he a beloved worker giving his body to the project, or is he a capitalist organizing the project for profit, yet doomed to return to dust like the peasantry?

The second *verso* suggests a sexual interpretation, a hawk taking a swallow from “her” nest. Could this refer to abuse of indigenous women by authority figures? Could it refer to the power of brute force to overcome societal norms of chastity or

fidelity? Could it refer to events that routinely occurred when the forces of capitalist development came to town and intermingled with the residents?

By the third verse, the situation seems to be deteriorating. What does the townspeople receive in exchange for losing his “swallow”? Financial gain, symbolized by a meal? Ephemeral satisfaction? What kind of meal is this? Is it gourmet, or does it recall the “juba” served to slaves in British colonies--leftovers eaten by buzzards, recycled? When the development project leaves town, has the town been improved, or have the environment and the women been defiled, and the garbage left behind?

The *estribillos* (refrains) of this *son* seem to change the subject, perhaps to lighten it up. “May they play the violin, may they play the violón, What pretty legs, have the daughters of don Simón.” Beyond symbolism, this refrain shifts the consciousness from engagement with material politics to enjoyment of the basics of life, of music, dance and community, and the ability of the people to maintain this awareness notwithstanding capitalist projects. It actually embodies resistance, even as it dissimulates it, with these jolly words.

*La Candela* is another *son* that, on the surface, describes what might be a vacation. A girl embarks upon a boat trip and is cautioned to watch out for the “candles,” a mildly bawdy image. Yet an alternate interpretation, given the historical context, could be the involuntary travel of exile or slavery, which separates daughters from families and makes them sexual chattel. The *son* is slower, in minor key. This

does not suggest humor, especially when each line is plaintively sung twice, in the call, and the response.

Una niña se embarcó	A girl embarked
En un barco para afuera	On a ship for the sea
El contramaestro le dice	The boatswain tells her
Cuidado con la candela	Careful with the candle
A mí no me quema mamá	It doesn't burn me, mama
A mí no me quema papá	It doesn't burn me, papa
A mí no me quema nada	Nothing burns me
Ni la candela ni el arraz	Not the candle nor the Moorish chieftain
Ni la candela que está apagá	Nor the candle that is out (339).

This *son* could be a way to acknowledge the deep trauma of such tragedy, a way of externalizing and witnessing it for survival. Such simple lyrics code layers of innuendo. This did not always fool the authorities, however.

The fandangos began to be poorly viewed—as resistance of the commoners to the weight of Bourbon modernity—by the authorities. The African touch was notable in these dances called “lascivious and full of abominations unworthy of Christian behavior” (my trans.; Ochoa Serrano 76).

In a now infamous anecdote, the *son* “Chuchumbé” (colloquially, a part of the male anatomy “*seis pulgas abajo de l’ombligo*” as Bay Area maestra Maria de la Rosa says) arrived in 1766 in Veracruz from Cuba. Not only was it bawdy, but it mocked a priest. The Inquisition banned it and others, but this only provoked resistance, and “Chuchumbé” went viral throughout New Spain.

The *son* “Los Enanos” (the dwarfs) may have emerged soon after the occupation of Mexico by the French during the Pastry Wars, circa 1840. Its title may refer to Napoleon’s stature, as suggested in this line from the *estribillo*: “*Son, son, son los enanos, chiquititos, y veteranos!*” (They are, are, are the dwarfs, tiny and

precious, and veterans too!) During a street performance of this *son*, a soldier was shot dead by colonial soldiers while doing the difficult knees-bent dwarf dance (Sheehy 36).

Beyond the surface, erotic, and political layers of meaning within *jarocho* lyrics, yet another layer sometimes resides. It actively preserves pre-conquest Mesoamerican and African cultural capital. Some bucolic-sounding titles in fact reference animist beliefs such as Nahualism. “El Pájaro Carpintero” (The Woodpecker) honors a species with a deep magical heritage in the Sotavento, as a portent, protector and messenger.

Of the first birds  
Who have warbled in this world...  
The most valued  
Is the woodpecker...(357).<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, the *son* “La Culebra,” the lyrics of which easily read as lascivious, sings of an animal of significance in mythology throughout Africa, the Caribbean and Veracruz. Serpents of various species are revered as spirits of birth and death who embody rivers and rainbows, goddesses, gods and dragons. In English:

Of the bad animals I fear none...  
Go snake  
Throw yourself in the water  
Go to the prow  
Of my boat (345).

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<sup>46</sup> This recalls Parita Mukta’s findings in *Upholding the Common Life* on a song about a bird in the Mirabai cult that has survived centuries in present-day India, as a practice of resistance and transcendence for marginalized castes, genders and *dalits* (untouchables). The words of the bird disguise a conversation the protagonist has with herself, a liminal space into which she enters to map her path forward from among suboptimal options.

Veracruz' *culebreros* include professionals who treat snake bites with traditional herbs and by sucking out the venom, and others who hunt to control the proliferation of snakes within ranchos (Delgado Calderón, 2004). An Afro-Mexican *culebrera* is the protagonist of the Papantla *Negritos* dance. African traditions have revered snakes as “all-powerful, supernatural beings” from Egyptian times, when the syllable “ob” signified them. Thus African-descended “obeahmen” linked with sorcery throughout the Caribbean are said to keep snakes (Wirtz 196). The African deity Obatala, called Damballah in Voodoo, is a serpent energy who provides for peaceful cohabitation with pythons, and protects children and the disabled. He is married to Ayida Weddo, a rainbow serpent, also associated with creation. In Mesoamerican lore, snakes also consort with rainbows of creation and storms. Recall the Arco Iris rainbow goddess of Cozamaloapan and her linkages with mother goddesses. They associated with snakes. Thus in “La Culebra,” the propensity exists for layers of meaning beyond the ribald.

Verbal coding and dissimulation also frequent improvisation within *son jarocho*, because, among other reasons:

...the impromptu character of an improvisation is in itself often a calculated mask, the product of careful preparation...” (Greenblatt qtd. in Asad 11).

Sheehy documented an entire repertoire of premeditated *son* verses available for use in improvisation (368-76). Not everyone is able to improvise according to formal poetic structures at a fandango, but some are, to the delight of attendees. Impromptu lyrics may be innocuous, complimenting a dancer or an outfit, but they also can make fun of bad manners or lament politics and the environment. Of course, sometimes one masquerades as the other. The practice of improvising lyrics was widespread in Latin

America during colonial times, and can be traced to Moorish Andalusia and West Africa, where the *griots*, professional singers who told oral histories in occasions similar to Mesoamerican *mitotes*, improvised praise songs for the rich (to others' disgust) (Hester, *Africa* 57). This practice enables artists to dissimulate true messages behind the usual lyrics of a *son*, thus to resist and transcend.

Yet another form of verbal coding has musical aspects, as well. Some Mesoamerican and West African languages were and/or are tonal. Their words included identifiable pitch combinations. Recall that Yoruba folksongs are sung to the inflections of words (Hester 39). The West African Kwa language is tonal—its words include pitch inflections. Instruments such as Yoruba talking drums emulate words through pitched rhythms. Context provided the cues to decode drummed messages. Similarly, analogs of words in a number of tonal Mesoamerican languages have been whistled. The Chinantec of Oaxaca, close to the Sotavento, speak tonally and whistle the same words using the same tones and emphases. The extent to which this originally served a coded purpose is not clear, but the opportunity to invoke it as a code in the face of colonial forces, is. Whistling is an embellishment in *son* performance, but the scope of this research does not enable further investigation here as to whether *jarocho* melodies ever code words.

Still, coding in the Sotavento has long adopted a variety of modalities: mixing languages, *doble sentido*, improvisation. In African-descended music in the United States “Encoded communication was sustained within songs and instrumental music

styles throughout the twentieth century” (Hester 216). This is also true of *son jarocho*, and cultural contexts still create the need.

#### **IV. C. 2. Masquing**

Some *jarocho* occasions incorporate masks and costumes. This practice occurs, of course, all over the globe, where meanings extend beyond dissimulation, resistance and transcendence, to moral instruction or reification of power structures. In *jarocho* country, masks mock the New Year’s *El Viejo* (Old Man)—a rich landlord archetype—and famous authority figures, dissimulating revelers’ faces. Masked dances also accompany Dia de los Muertos, known as *Xantoles* in Veracruz, and practiced increasingly north of the border. Some celebrants mask as skeletons, resisting and transcending fear of death. Others pose as the devil, or dress to resemble West African *Ibibio* ritual dancers. Aztec costumes and face paint appear. All bear markers of transcending the quotidian.

Cross-dressing also occurs during some of these festivals. It comes across as high-spirited comedy, but there may be layers of representation. As a mode of resistance, female garb, even its humor, could of course symbolize disrespect for women; yet, alternative meanings could include a plea for gentle treatment by the authorities. The inability to gracefully inhabit drag may be an inverted expression of admiration for feminine grace. Provocative women’s garb might serve to chastise a flirtatious partner or parody a politician’s follies. Yet again, it might simply celebrate the opportunity to transcend daily reality. The meaning is determined by the masquerader. One female character who appears in many masques in rural Mexico is

the Minga, a version of Malinche or Malintzin. The lore surrounding the indigenous woman who served as translator and then wife to Cortez, is similarly rife with layers of interpretation according to different beholders.

The *Negrito* has been another mask adopted for various occasions. It depicts people of African ancestry, dissimulating reactions ranging from fear to respect. A resident of Veracruz whose features suggest African heritage told me that the term “*negrito*” is not disrespectful there; however, historical treatment of Afro-Mexicans renders that debatable. African-American scholar Anita González writes:

Rural Mexican peasant communities used masks to comment on African presence in their local areas...distancing themselves from blackness even as they improvised around its symbolic iconography...they do not re-create a static imaginary about who blacks are...Rather, each masked character that appears in community dance is quite different...*Negritos* dances in Papantla feature a black woman who cures her son of a snake bite...in Michoacán the *Negritos* dancers are tall, stately figures that...appear to have power and stature...the reasons for dancing the black are as varied as the historical circumstances...(Afro 92).

I have not heard the *son jarocho* “Los Negritos” performed in the Bay Area. The lyrics “How it frightens me how the blacks work eating tortillas with fried meat” (Sheehy 357) may express the kind of xenophobia that could arise when encountering the unexpected, or dissimulate another idea, but they suggest racism in this culture.

Aspects of resistance and transcendence in a *Negrito* costume include affirmation of African presence and influence. Recall that during colonial times, Africans often disappeared from census statistics. After independence, active acknowledgement still resisted State narratives. Another resistance aspect might be as found in techniques of dissimulation: *Negritos* dancers who depict Africans with



awkward movements perhaps imitated movements that Afro-Mexicans had confected to disarm or mock the authorities. This would parallel *capoeira* practices in Brazil that dissimulated self-defense training as ritual dance, or cakewalks in the U.S. that parodied whites' plantation dances (Hester, *Africa* 145). Another reason for awkward moves in portrayals of Africans could be masqueraders encountering difficulty when imitating polyrhythmic dance. Some *Negritos* masques in Mexico chronicle resistance. The Chontal Turks-and-Moors ritual of Oaxaca depicts Africans throwing off oppressors. The devil dances of Costa Chica pose an African leading resistance against the Church.

If the god of the Catholic conquistadores caused pain and suffering for the Afro-Mexicans, then it is natural that underdogs would invert Spanish metaphysical ideals and call to the opposite power, to the Devil, for sustenance...Bahktin has written about this type of performance inversion (A. González, *Afro* 61).

Thus, resistance as a matter of dissimulation finds a site in at least some *Negritos* masques, as well as in cross-dressing, devil and skeleton masks.

In the Bay Area, a kind of masquing occurs at *jarocho* occasions, when urban *norteños* adopt traditional dress of the *jarocho* people. One informant says, "there's something that resonates...we love to dress so simply yet elegantly with *rebozos*, etc." Fandango clothes in Veracruz represent pride of identity; many are hand-made and all are maintained with care. To borrow this style here is more than an aesthetic choice; the clothes must be sought-after to equate to what is, and has been, worn in Veracruz. So the masque is aesthetic, yes, but the aesthetic is hand-made, thus pre-

capitalist. Moreover, the apparel is also a sign of respect and investment in the tradition, a tradition of resistance.

#### **IV. C. 3. Concealment**

Coding, masking and costumes are ritual techniques of dissimulation. They also conceal the meanings of words, symbols, and identities. Concealment is a way to preserve cultural, intellectual, and tangible property, as well as persons, in resistance of authorities. During colonial times, *son jarocho* was the object of numerous prohibitions. A 1769 Inquisición folio took exception to “El Toro Sacamandú,” “Los Panaderos,” “Pan de Jarabe,” and “Pan de Manteca” (García de Leon, *Fandango* 99 Note 2.) In 1803 Jalapa, dancing “El Jarabe Gatuno” was denounced to Church authorities, as was “El Torito,” likened to tango, and the Andalusian “chunga” of “La Petenera” and “La Manta” (100). In 1768:

...the Commisary of the Holy Office of the Port consulted the Court over what to do about “the altars that are in certain houses and quarters with many lights and music, in which ritual parties are formed and many indecencies are committed before the sacred images in the pretext of devotion” (my trans.; García de Leon *Fandango* 31 Note 43).

The authorities would close urban dance halls and ban *sones*, causing *fandanguera/os* to seek sites out of perceptual range. The people of the countryside, *campesina/os*, had long enjoyed celebrating in the open tropical air. Thus, many fandangos took place in ranchos, earthen village squares, and cleared fields. Hidden by the hills, the forest, and the tall sugar cane, they enjoyed privacy and concealment from disapproving entities. Several of the chronicles reproduced by García de León (*Fandango*) describe the difficulty of reaching rural fandangos around Veracruz due

to thick foliage, unreliable roads, and purposive concealment. Similar dynamics characterize musical rituals from other cultures. For example, Robin Sylvan in *Trance-Formation* describes labyrinthine procedures that adherents of early rave cults had to go through to locate and attend certain raves (100).

In the Bay Area today, some *son jarocho* occasions—fandangos, concerts, and workshops—are publically advertised. Others are open to all, but communicated only by word of mouth. Still others are by invitation only. Locations are often in private residences, which are harder to find. Similarly, the annual *Fandango Fronterizo* at the Tijuana/San Diego border is advertised cryptically: posters do not give instructions for finding the exact location, which is off remote side streets. Locations must provide for local noise and parking rules, just as during colonial times when horses transported revelers. Similarly, the noise of celebration has to be weighed against alerting possibly intolerant bystanders to retaliate. Thus, concealment has multiple uses in fandango ritual.

#### **IV. C. 4. Oral transmission**

A practice that characterizes many ritual traditions is oral transmission. Although this may have originally been the easiest or only way to pass along cultural capital, it also reduced the risk of outsiders gaining access for purposes of appropriation or surveillance. Like ritual musical traditions of West Africa and Mesoamerica, *son jarocho* has continued to be orally transmitted despite availability of alternatives. In indigenous Mesoamerica and Africa:

Music other than that of professional musicians, teachers, etc. is learned primarily through social experience and communal participation (Hester, *Africa* 54).

Similarly, in the Sotavento:

Musicians learn *liricamente*, that is, by rote, through observation and casual help from others. Performing from musical notation is unheard of, even among the most skilled professionals (Sheehy 66).

Now that newcomers dependent upon Western methods of knowing desire to practice *son jarocho*, several catalogs have been compiled. Still, those who are able to receive training from direct oral sources are privileged by the personal, embodied nature of the method, as well as by access to substantive riches of lore and nuances of expression not conducive to written treatment. Still again, a learner who is not fluent in Spanish will miss subtleties and variants of lyrics. Learners who tap out the *hemiole* and *sesquialterae* of *zapateado* rhythms from notated music will miss regional variants of swing. *Jaraneros* tolerate this, although it marks hobbyism.

In the Bay Area, oral transmission is still the norm. “I would prefer you not record our lessons, it might get in the way of learning,” says María de la Rosa. This serves powerfully to reserve knowledge to the sincere seeker and to conceal it from interlopers. Moreover, it accords due respect to a pre-capitalist tradition by preserving its pre-capitalist modes of production, as well as its artistic integrity.

#### **IV. 3. 5. Disguised drums**

Another technique of dissimulation involves instrumentation. Over time, the instruments used in *son jarocho* have changed, but plucked lutes have remained a constant. *Jaranas*, *requintos*, *leonas*, and harp produce the identifying timbres. Dryly-

strummed chords and melodies plucked with horn *espigas* produce percussive sonorities. An indispensable instrument is the *tarima* upon which dancers add percussion lines. Other percussion instruments, such as the *quijada* (rasped donkey jaw) and *pandero* (octagonal frame drum), may accompany. Yet actual drums appear rarely. The genre is driven by percussion, but lacks drums. Herein lies the resistance. As noted in chapter 3, drums were problematic during colonial times, both for the authorities and for people who preferred not to be noticed by the authorities.

During colonization, the drums of Africans and Native Americans were outlawed in parts of the hemisphere. The development of steel drums has been traced to bans in Trinidad. Drums were banned in Jamaica from 1688, burned in Barbados in 1699, and forbidden as a means of calling meetings in St. Kitts from 1711. The authorities had come to understand that African and Native American music functioned not only as entertainment, but as communication, as ritual, and thus as a means of both bodily and cultural survival. In New Spain, the priesthood at times required Native Americans to relinquish drums and rattles in order to avoid charges of idolatry (Tavárez 413-44.) The Church fathers must have become aware that Mesoamerican mythology ascribed divine provenance to such instruments; zapateo could have been a sonic substitute. As imports from Spain, the cymbals of the *pandero* and the rattling teeth of the *quijada* perfectly dissimulated prohibited rattles.

In the Sotavento, *tarima* percussion lines also dissimulated as dance. This constituted agency, not mere acquiescence. The *tarima* has been linked to Spanish and African traditions, and *zapateado* maestra Rubí Oseguera:

...informs us that indigenous populations prior to Spanish and African contact used footwork as a means of sonic percussion and expression. However, the dialogue that is clearly evident in the footwork within the *son* produces moments of tension and release in the music...more reflective of an African presence..." (M.González, "Sonic" 65).

Similarly:

Akako is a lively dance in compound triple time in which (Sudanese) boys stamp...while girls clap their hands to accompany the singing" (Hester 70-1).

The identifying volume of drums was inadvisable in maroon communities that sought to evade capture or assimilation into colonial society. Strings dissimulated percussion instruments in colonial Puerto Rico (Quintero Rivera 27-37). The relatively modest sonic production of plucked and even bowed lutes took up rhythms that had formerly been the provenance of drums, as discussed in chapter 3, contributing to both physical and cultural survival.

#### **IV. C. 6. Syncretism**

Syncretism was discussed earlier as a strategy of dissimulation and resistance for the purpose of preserving traditions, deities, and rituals that had been prohibited. Asad explores how syncretism also may serve colonizers. He contrasts Enlightenment-era religious symbolic forms that use authority to exert power with non-Western use of participative ritual to empower participants or imbue them with direct experiences. Syncretism may satisfy a hegemony's will to control as well as a people's will to endure:

The idea that cultural borrowing must lead to total homogeneity and to loss of authenticity is clearly absurd, but the idea of projects' having translatable historical structures should not be confused with it. When a project is translated from one site to another, from one agent to another, versions of power are produced (Asad 12).

As a product of blending forces of resistance with the improvisatory nature of the colonizer--the “calculated mask”--syncretism redistributes power among the involved parties. For *sonera/os*, the genre’s syncretism dissimulated ritual practices of constituent cultures through the techniques discussed above as well as narratives of secularization of the practices. For colonizers, *son*’s syncretic aspects satisfied needs for appearances of successful subordination to their ways, by providing secularized narratives to vet *son*’s presence in hegemonic rites.

#### **IV. D. Transcending identity in liminality**

Like the original *jarocha/os*, a number of today’s *jaranera/os* seek to define cultural identities in an increasingly diverse and diasporic world. *Son jarocho* seems to address this for some, perhaps due to its transcultural history. George B. Sanchez-Tello’s thesis describes his experience with this, as discussed in chapter 6. The present section explores techniques that evoke liminality, a stage of some rituals in which conventional identities may be released, providing opportunities for new ones to be forged. Transformation becomes possible. Considered here are repetition, rhythm, periodicity, contour, density, embodiment, and pilgrimage.

##### **IV. D. 1. Repetition, periodicity and rhythm**

Composer Carlos Chávez wrote about how indigenous music of Mexico often unfolds through innumerable repetitions over stretches of hours, even days. While a Mesoamerican melody might involve just a few notes, the composer wrote succinctly about the impact of its repetition in performance:

Magic song proceeds by small melodic patterns constantly reiterated  
(*Musical Thought* 42-4, 98).

Does Chávez' "magic" refer, as Goody suggests, to practices undertaken to produce empirical results? Magic generally purports to produce transformation of some kind. To be effective, its techniques require transcendence, at the very least, of disbelief. Hence they ought to produce liminality, where known physics goes moot and transcendent identities and conditions become possible. Robert Stevenson wrote:

A sympathetic hearer will not count the hundred-odd times a simple triad arpeggio may be sung at a Huichol Fiesta del Peyote, but will rather make a serious effort at transporting himself into the culture area in which the music originated (45).

A feature of *son jarocho* that appears in customs of Africa, indigenous Americas, and Iberia, is repetition of a verse-chorus scheme. Chords, strumming patterns, melodies, and rhythms are repeated at length, sometimes for over an hour. (Of course, durations like this do not occur in commercial contexts, but rather in traditional community settings.) Repetition is capable of inducing entrainment, a phenomenon in which separate oscillators, in proximity, synchronize their oscillations (Clayton, Sager and Will 3-75). Entrainment may also apply to people in community, who tend to keep the same rhythms socially, psychologically and biologically, thus strengthening communal bonds. In groups playing music together, repetition and entrainment may facilitate dissolution of everyday inhibitions in favor of common experiences. The mechanism by which this happens is suggested by Kristina Wirtz in her monograph on the syncretized rituals of Cuban Santería. She considers the work of neuroscientists who postulate that



... transcendent states constitute temporary but extraordinary transformations  
... In fact, the conditions of intense physical or mental activity that provoke such states include many found in religious rituals: focused meditation, rhythmic motor activity, chanting, and rapid dancing, for example (96).

*Son jarocho*'s traditional practices include the very kinds of intense activity proposed here: chanting in the repetition of *estribillos*; rapid dancing in *zapateado*; rhythmic motor activity in repetitious *jarana* strumming. This last has another kind of magic: the tendency of a repetitive motion to become easier to perpetuate as the number of repetitions increases.

...every purposive movement, when it catches on, loses sight of its telos and continues as a periodicity with a force that is not the force of the will launching it and launching it once again and then again...The movements and intensities of our bodies...extend neither toward a result nor a development. They are figures of the repetition compulsion...(Lingis 30).

Reduction in the amount of energy needed to keep making instrumental repetitions is one of the affects that Bay Area *jaranera/os* have reported, as seen in chapters 5 and 6. The concept of entrainment recurs in this chapter's section on embodiment.

Wirtz' focused meditation appears in *son jarocho* in the kind of multi-tasking that Andres Flores referred to as magic, or in a profound moment with a *son* that causes a woman to "leave her soul on the *tarima*," or in the trance that extended repetition of a *jarana* pattern produces.

While many works of music proceed according to linear formal structures, *son jarocho* lends itself better to analysis of its periodicities. The majority of works in the genre involve numerous repetitions of a *verso-estribillo* (verse-refrain) pattern; one iteration of the pattern would be a musical period. The affective impact of periodicity

in music becomes more apparent in the section about contour immediately following this one, which explores how music structured this way can produce extraordinary affects in the discussion of “El Balajú.”

Rhythm is enmeshed with periodicity and repetition, because like the latter two, the former involves subdivisions of time. However, a rhythm need never repeat itself. While many rhythms refer to a constant meter which divides time in a recurring way, still the rhythms themselves are sequences of pulses of varying lengths which may or may not ever repeat, depending on composition, genre and style. Why is rhythm’s distinction from meter important? Here, it provides for polyrhythm: the superimposition of two or more independent rhythms to achieve a multidimensional whole that may never repeat or resemble periodicity as understood here. This is how polyrhythm works in the *Rabinal Achi*, a pre-conquest Mayan musical ritual. However, Africa is where polyrhythm has developed most highly, as sophisticated, coded individual rhythms with periodicities of different durations that sound simultaneously, producing intense, multi-layered sound that often only initiates can navigate. Polyrhythm and cross-rhythm exist in discrete chunks within *son jarocho*, when multiple *jaranas* sound discretionary accents placed by their players, against individually embellished *zapateado*, a syncopated melody that may resemble an African bell rhythm pattern, and the freely placed notes of improvisational solos.<sup>47</sup> While repetition and periodicity are conducive to entrainment and liminality, the

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<sup>47</sup> Appendices 2 and 3 illustrate. Pérez Fernandez’ transcriptions of “La Morena” in *La Música Afromestiza Mexicana* demonstrate, too, as do Sheehy’s other transcriptions.

simultaneous unpredictability of improvisation and polyrhythm may heighten ritual participants' attention. Wirtz explains more fully what scientists have observed about intense mental states that lead to transcendent ones:

...neurobiologists and cognitive scientists study...religious experience by combining physiological studies, brain imaging, and more complex models of consciousness... studying brain activity during the sorts of religious experiences they have been able to capture in subjects willing to sit quietly in labs for brain scans during and after their experiences—namely yogic, zen, and Christian prayer meditation...Newberg and his coauthors postulate a neural scenario for the cognitive and emotional effects of slow, contemplative rituals such as prayers in realizing the mind's "mystical potential" to produce certain kinds of "transcendent states" (27-32)... These transcendent states constitute temporary but extraordinary transformations that those experiencing them may attribute to sacred power. In fact, the conditions of intense physical or mental activity that provoke such states include many found in religious rituals: focused meditation, rhythmic motor activity, chanting, and rapid dancing, for example. But none is the exclusive provenance of religious experience. Running, for example, can also provoke the transcendent state they call flow state. While their physiological studies allow them to identify transcendent states in the lab, Newberg and his colleagues note that religious experience cannot be externally verified; only the subject can report on what his or her experience in a given moment means...(96).

#### **IV. D. 3. Atemporal contour**

As I was working on this section, on TV in the next room quarterback Peyton Manning was saying, in his retirement speech, "We are going to teach our children to appreciate the little things in life, because, looking back, you realize those are the big things." The speaker has arguably transcendent achievements, winning a Superbowl at an age most quarterbacks are retired, through rigorous training and prioritization of the team. Manning's words could apply to contour in *son jarocho*. What is contour?

... at voodoo rituals...(it) is the gradual buildup of tension through musical repetition, sustained levels of intensity, and liberated emotional and physical states, expressed through dance and spontaneous movement" (Hester 111).

*Son jarocho*, too, practices a virtual ritual (fandango) that involves a buildup of intensity. Recall the stages of intensity in table 6. The factors plotted there contribute to buildup, as do shifts in texture, tempo, meter, tessitura, and timbre. The contour that results proceeds linearly through time, in a hill-shaped curve.

Individual *sones* also have contours that may evoke transformative, liminal states. Here is where “the little things are the big things.” Intensity levels--as defined above--stay fairly consistent throughout renderings of many *sones* in traditional settings, even though an individual *son* may continue well over half an hour. The flashiest solos are not reserved for a dramatic temporal climax, unlike in much Western music. Each succeeding soloist in the rendering of a *son* performs with a degree of animation that reflects personal mood rather than desire to impress. These features recall Stevenson’s comment about Mesoamerican music that “melodic climax is not (the) goal” and, regarding a repeating melody, “analysis cannot but reveal how aleatory are the changes from strophe to strophe” (*Aztec* 131, 133). This is one of the reasons that *sones* are referred to with the indefinite article rather than the definite: “un Balajú” is played, not “El Balajú.” Each rendering is unique.

A few *sones*, however, incorporate aspects of Western tropes of contour. “Siquisiri,” the customary opening *son* of Bay Area fandangos, often begins when only a few players have arrived. It may sound quiet, introspective, even tired. However, its lyrics ritually beckon attendees to arrive, and, as if by magic, attendees do appear, as “Siquisiri” continues. The players’ efforts are rewarded with infusions of pleasure each time another friend materializes to share in cherished practices. After

half an hour or forty-five minutes, intensity has built: many more musicians are playing, offering verses, and dancing. The amplitude may have quadrupled, and an ecstatic fiesta is presaged. Thus the contour of “Siquisiri” builds.

“Aguanieves” has a slower cadence, with lyrics about illicit young lovers lost in the sleet. It is often followed, without pause, by a vividly physical “El Zapateado.” The exciting affect of this shift moves moods from melancholic reverie to vibrant effort and catharsis.

Conversely, “El Balajú” has a subtler contour that is more common in *son jarocho* and, perhaps, more powerful for emphasizing “the little things.” The provenance of this *son* is likely a patchwork. The lyric that often begins it resembles that of a colonial European song called “Mambrú,” but the title could be African or indigenous. The lyric is in the third person: “Balajú went off to war.” We imagine we are about to hear a soldier’s tale or pirate’s ballad. But we veer quickly to other matters: “And would not take me.” Suddenly we are in the first person, in a quarrel between partners, calling into question exactly what sort of war Balajú meant to wage. The narrator decides to race Balajú to his destination. Next, the verses become alternately introspective, philosophical, and humorous. The ballad we thought we were going to hear never materializes; rather, we find ourselves in a tragi-fantasy of Shakespearian proportions. In succeeding verses, the singer recounts his difficulties as a black man left behind, her difficulties with life at sea, and their difficulties with love.

The identity of the narrator shifts gender, race, profession, locale, and opinions; the singers offering the verses do, too. New verses may be improvised, with extended instrumental interludes separating them. A deep listener shifts from awareness of only her conventional identity, to encompassing all these identities. This resembles scholars' definitions of liminality. The contour here is holographic. With musical repetition but no buildup to a climax, time disappears in favor of a universal now. There is no temporal curve; still, contour traverses three dimensions, starting in the form of a tightly closed flower bud of limited ego identity, then opening like a blossom to all kinds of possibilities. Balajú has embarked on a sea where the compass points in all directions.

As a comforting pole star, the same *estribillo* returns over and again. “*Ariles* and more *ariles*, *Ariles* like I said before...” or “*Ariles* and more *ariles*, *Ariles* from the canyon...” or “*Ariles* and more *ariles*, *Ariles* from he who left...” “*Ariles y mas ariles*, *Ariles del campo verde...*” What are *ariles*? A literal answer is hard to find, but the term resembles one for “seed husks.” Maybe a pirate sees lots of seed husks floating on the waves. Maybe seed husks, the leftovers of a blossom blooming, represent that whatever the preceding verse was about, is just dust in the wind, or as Shakespeare would say, the stuff that dreams are made of. Maybe seed husks represent signs of land, the canyon, the green field, a beacon for the sailor! Or maybe they represent wave after wave, wave after wave, of isolation at sea—and the hallucinations that can bring about, the stuff that dreams are made of. Are the *ariles* a gift from Balajú, “he who left?” A message in a bottle? What are the *ariles*? Three

syllables, and no matter where the verses take us, we come back to them. The flower bud is tightly closed, then it blossoms wide with possibilities, then it jettisons its seeds, and what is left is always the husks, *a-ri-les*. A nonsense vocable, a cosmic “lulla-by.” Sweet dreams are made of these. The more comfortable we are with the familiar, the less we know. Wherever we think we are, is going to change. The holographic contour of a *son* like this, when it lasts a long time, can produce a liminal state, and a transcendent one. Last night at two a.m. I texted a Mexican friend, a long time *jaranero*, to ask him what ariles are. He responded immediately:

*Puede o mas bien tiene varios significados, pero el mas comun seria suenos o fantasias, ilusiones...Bueno, eso creo yo! Si algo asi, una metafora...es lo que tu quieres que sea! (It can have, or better has, several meanings, but the most common would be dreams or fantasies, illusions...well, at least I think so! Something like a metaphor...it is whatever you want it to be.)*

He continued that the term is used in the Matachines *danza* of Zacatecas, in which his father used to perform, to signify many small reeds sewn onto a costume to bounce together during the dance and serve as rattles. So *ariles* may be an indigenous reference. To me on this day, then, they mean each of thousands of dreamed years of indigenous ritual that have survived by staying out of the limelight, dissimulated. Every year the ritual returns, the corn returns, the harvest returns and the rattling husks and reeds return; divine magic returns, and the ephemeral was all just a dream.

As context for atemporal contour, Ashis Nandy portrays “timelessness or...cyclical or other forms of disreputable nonlinear times” with oblique praise:

...should our public and intellectual awareness include a new sensitivity to the cultural priorities, psychological skills, and ... ethical concerns represented by the societies or communities that in different ways still...choose to live outside history?...Is ahistoricity also a form of wilderness that needs to be

protected in these environmentally conscious times...that could protect us from the consequences of our profligate ways, in case the historical vision exhausts itself and we have to retrace our steps? (46-7).

Nandy contends that those who “live outside (history), especially in societies where myths are the predominant mode of organizing experiences of the past” practice what he calls “principled forgetfulness” and evince fuzzy boundaries in conceptualizing the past. He critiques the methods of some subaltern historians as “powerful pleas for alternative histories, not for alternatives TO history” (53).<sup>48</sup> More recently, new materialist feminists have advocated alternate concepts of time as “queering” of time, useful in performatively creating positive futures, as will be discussed in chapter 6.<sup>49</sup>

As described, the contours of *sones* like “Balajú” are timeless; to listen to them is a meditative practice of watching a flow. To participate by offering verses or improvised melodies is to cycle from the passive to the active, then back again. This affect increases because the order in which the verses are offered may vary each time a “Balajú” is performed. As a key factor in this theory of timeless contour, there is no timeline of events. The “first” verse described above may not be offered until nearly the end of a “Balajú.” When that happens, the affect is that of a recapitulation--not from this performance, but from performance after performance over the ages.

If the reader prefers a temporal contour of fandango, table 7 offers a model.

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<sup>48</sup> Perhaps Nandy would join Anita González and Lopez Moreno in deprioritizing scholarly calls for material proofs of origins in a musical genre, and reprioritizing oral tradition.

<sup>49</sup> Recall the quote on pgs. 12-3: “For the future to bring hope and change, the now needs to be reconceptualized...(we) challenge the conception of time as a linear *chronos* determined by the logic of cause and effect...The ‘queering’ of time consists of disturbing chronological order, conceptualizing the present as always already interplaying with the past and charged with responsibility for the future...” (Sroda, et al. 119).



**Table 7. Conceptual contour of a (Bay Area or other) fandango**

Phase	Before music & between sones	<i>Siquisiri, or Aguanieve</i>	Mix of major/minor sones	Significant deep <i>son</i>	Significant climactic <i>son</i> (ie <i>La Bamba, Buscapies.</i> )	<i>Sones de madrugada</i>
Activities/ affects	Publicize, prepare, eat, drink, greetings, chat, tuning, etc.	Welcoming, propitiating, encouraging	Warming up gradually, humor, satire, releasing brain chemicals /intensity	Ultimate release of egocentrism as the heart takes over; liminality	Catharsis, elation and ecstasy; ego transcendence	<i>Communitas; wind-down; intimacy and relaxation</i>
Duration	2-4 hours	.5-1 hours	2-3 hours	.5-1 hour	.5-1 hour	1-? hours

A full fandango's duration might be anywhere from six hours up. Equally effective fandangos might rearrange the phases given above, or leave one or more out. With a few exceptions, *sones* may appear in any order. They are no more fixed than the order of verses in the rendering of an individual *son*. I would like to offer a visual representation of the timeless, holographic blossom contour suggested above, and to explore how this would be reflected in fandango as a whole, but its ineffable nature complicates the effort.

#### IV. D. 3. Density

This attribute impacts both temporal and atemporal contour. It is a function of textural and timbral complexity, and tempo. Hester notes that density characterizes many forms of African music in which multiple instruments sound at once, yielding high levels of aural stimulus and amplitude (personal communication). Textural and timbral complexities such as polyrhythms generate a wealth of detail that captures and holds participants' attention. *Son jarocho*, in fandango, is often quite dense. Sometimes twenty or more *jaranas* sound a common *compás* (periodic chord progression), but each musician may apply individual shifts of accents, intensity and

amplitude. Improvisational melody lines add complexity. One or more *requintos* play treble melodies; *arpas*, diatonic Veracruzian harps, offer melodic lines in counter-rhythms; the *marimbol* or *leona* give bass lines; and *zapateado*, *pandero*, and *quijada* intersperse percussive variety. The stimulus and amplitude that result center fandango-goers' attention on the *sones*, with the result that peoples' experience is communal.

#### **IV. D. 4. Embodiment**

Dance, playing, singing and improvising are embodied practices of *son jarocho*, learned by oral tradition, known by the body. Asad suggests that embodiment provides biological paths to transcendent experience, and recommends:

... inquiring into the ways in which embodied practices (including language in use) form a precondition for varieties of religious experience. The inability to enter into communion with God becomes a function of untaught bodies (76).

On a more mundane level, embodiment can be a mnemonic for learning. Keeping *tal* with the fingers, the Suzuki method, and the Guidonian hand exemplify embodied mnemonics in music. Sales trainers teach hand mudras for remembering selling points. Oral tradition teaches through listening and imitation in lieu of mental interpretation of written symbols.

Still, many Westerners have never proactively experienced embodied learning. We have been taught that knowledge is preserved and conveyed through visual symbols or their analogs. Those musicians who learn by listening, imitation, and quick memorization, however, approximate embodied learning. The result can be a more thorough internalization of the information learned.

Asad conceives of some ritual, itself, as embodied practice that transcends the interventions of coded symbolism. Some of these rituals have used bodily ordeals—pain, endurance—as techniques to access liminal states and emerge transcendently into new roles. Examples range from forty-day *chillas* undertaken by Indian musicians, to year-long seclusions of Mesoamerican shamanic initiates, to military boot camps, to medieval flagellants. These embodied procedures have been used by practitioners seeking to re-frame their identities, who variously reaped guiding visions, self-mastery, respect of a group, or communion with the divine. Embodied practices obviate analytical, symbolically mediated mental processes (such as reading) that may alienate learners from objects of learning and set up Du Boisian double consciousness. Embodiment circumvents the obfuscations of the ego's interventions—pride, attachment to limited concepts of self—enabling formation of new identities and community bonds. It enables liminality and transcendence. Martha Gonzalez includes resistance in the benefits of embodiment in *son jarocho*:

The embodied practice of the dance in the fandango created a site of dialogue outside of state colonial narratives that have extended across the border into Chicana/o consciousness (*Sonic* 65).

The phenomenon of entrainment relates to embodiment:

An entrainment model suggests we look at engagement with music not simply as a process of encoding and decoding information, but of embodied interaction and 'tuning-in' to musical stimuli. Musicking humans can be seen as embodying multiple oscillators... which may be mutually entrained in a process of self-synchrony as well as entraining to external stimuli in the processes of making and engaging with musical sound. Entrainment in musicking implies a profound association between different humans at a physiological level and a shared propensity at a biological level. The implications of this view for studies of socialization and identification are obvious, and so too is the link to questions of enculturation: someone's ability

to respond appropriately to a given musical stimulus can...be a marker of the degree to which an individual 'belongs'... (Clayton, Sager and Will 21).

Lingis suggests entrainment, discussing bodily periodicities and repetition. Tarr, et al. summarize neuroscience and psychology studies that support this. Clayton, et al. add:

As a process directed by entrainment, attention can be understood as partly intentional and goal-directed and partly controlled by the pace of an external stimulus (through an involuntary, automatic assimilation of that rate). The complementarity...enables the attender to respond to the environment while also having some control over his/her experience (15).

So, embodied entrainment supports both liminality and transcendent agency.

#### **IV. D. 5. Improvisation**

Karlton Hester refers to improvisation as a survival skill in diasporic contexts. Improvised interventions dynamically support survival in any manner of unexpected circumstances. In music, improvisation, like embodiment, requires performers' attention, and works best when the performer is not caught up in double consciousness. Thus it both requires transcendence as an input and demonstrates it as an output. Rap has been related to *griot/jeli* improvisation, the humorous/satiric aspects of which also appear in *son jarocho*. Improvisational placement of known verses alongside newly improvised ones, serves to disorient outsiders even as it keeps insiders' attention. This can lead to liminality, as we observed in "Balajú." Wordless musical improvisation functions similarly, as noted in the discussion of rhythm.

#### **IV. D. 6. Substances**

Some rituals in the constituent cultures of *son jarocho* involved psychoactive substances. Peyote, for example, accompanied some *mitotes*; *pulque* (an alcoholic beverage) was imbibed at many. Libations are served and sacrificed in West African

ritual traditions. Colonial Spaniards and Moors enjoyed hashish and tobacco in dance festivals. In fandangos, participants could conceivably use any of these substances, but this would not be ritually prescribed, nor would illegal substances be served at a communal table. Moreover, the physical effort of participation in the music and dance would quickly metabolize intoxicants, replacing them with psychoactive chemicals naturally produced by the body in response to ritual practices (endorphins, serotonin, dopamines, adrenaline, etc.) What is important at fandango, however, is to partake of the communal food buffet. This practice realizes shared experience and mutual acceptance—*convivencia* and *communitas*.

#### **IV. D. 7. Pilgrimage**

This custom has been practiced in all the contributory traditions of *son jarocho*. It can comprise an entire initiation. It produces liminal states through the disorientation, endurance, and/or pain associated with travel. Pilgrims to Santiago Compostela in medieval Spain underwent voluntary discomforts. Pilgrims to Mecca traversed great distances in harsh terrain long before modern transportation was available. In Mexico, pilgrimage practices have long included many patron saints festivals, even transgressive ones like *Santa Muerte*. The Candelaria festival in Tlacotalpan each February draws pilgrims from across the country and beyond to its fandangos and ritual celebrations.

Within the *jaranera/o movimiento*, pilgrimage takes several forms, all of them voluntary. Many Bay Area *jaranera/os* visit Veracruz to pay respect to the origins of their practices, to study with acknowledged masters, and/or to work in a *laudería* to

fashion their own instruments. In the U.S., modest pilgrimage opportunities include travel to large events such as the annual *Fandango Fronterizo* at the Tijuana/San Diego border. Recently, a group of *jaranera/os* from Chicago traveled the West Coast of the U.S. to connect with *jaranera/o* communities there.

Beyond the liminality inherent in travel, pilgrimage provides a rite of passage, a challenge that has been undertaken by others in the community; this becomes yet another shared experience to strengthen *communitas*. Moreover, the ego is backgrounded when entering unfamiliar territory, and with this effort, the aspiring participant may come to feel more worthy of acceptance or agency within the community, as did members of my family when we made our trip.

#### **IV. D. 8. Identity (re)formation**

Marina Alonso Bolanos discusses the bond between identity and music (114, 126). García de León adds:

The fandango was then the festival that gave identity to the world of the whites, mestizos, blacks and mulattos that shared the local culture without identifying with the Spaniards or Indians, and that created its own culture from towns sewn together, ancient centers now mestizo, that conserved, in many cases, their indigenous sectors (my trans.; Fandango 19).

How does this apply in the U.S.? Anita González suggests that

...artists are using Jarocho music and dance to assert their Chicano identity...to assert Mexican identity in an increasingly diverse America. This reuse of Mexican dance and Mexican dance symbolism is a response to the cultural politics of migration. As Mexicans in Diaspora lose their connections with “homeland” culture, they turn to Jarocho song to reestablish them. The Afro-Mexican music of Veracruz stands in for what may have been lost... (*Afro* 135).

The work of ritual theorists and Chicana feminists explains the relationship between identity formation and processes that produce liminality and transcendence. To these writers, identity definition is both a practice and an objective of ritual. During the event, identity may be released and defined anew. For Gloria Anzaldúa, this takes place during emergence from *nepantla*, a Mesoamerican limbo or bardo, into the third space where all identities coexist. For Emma Pérez, the decolonial imaginary replaces the colonized illusion: “*Ariles y mas ariles...*” To Chela Sandoval, the methodology of the oppressed invokes love as a differential *movida*, not a sentimental or possessive passion, but rather a stepping beyond pride and comfort into a liminal space from which is reached realization of underlying unity, as in *communitas*. These processes are somewhat contemplative, yet also behavioral, with some similarities to Turner’s and Racy’s ritual models. Fandango and other *son jarocho* practices provide sites in which the third space, the decolonial imaginary and differential *movidas* may produce liminality. They offer identity possibilities to those of Mexican heritage and anyone willing to take up the practices. Even as *jarocho* people forged identity through fandango, so too might today’s emerging mixes of ethnicities, genders, and families. Feminist readings of identity construction inform chapter 6 of this study, as does a thesis in which a *jaranero* describes his identity process in a *son jarocho* community.

#### IV. D. 9. Magic

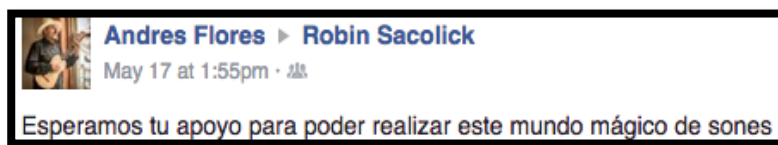


Fig. 12. Author’s May 2016 Facebook feed.

The subtitle of this chapter is “magic in disguise.” Dissimulation techniques are, of course, modes of disguise, as are low-key discussions of affects as sometimes seen in chapter 5’s interviews. So, is there magic? Recall that:

... linkages are found between the mythology and folk magic of the region...among Mesoamerican, Andalusian and African magic systems, interacting with a local rituality that quite possibly made use of music and dance in curative magic...The same ritual dynamic of the fandango succeeds in creating, at times, an effect tied to the religious, a product more likely of certain harmonic accumulations (García de León 2006, 25-6).

Regardless of whether magic is non-rational or metaphysical, religious or evil, real or superstitious, it plays a role in *son jarocho*. Is it a ritual technique? Yes, for participants who embrace magic, or even feel the thrill of the uncanny when contemplating magic. Flores refers to performing several musical roles at once, a kind of intense embodiment, as magic. Magic is prominent in *bruja/o* and nahualist lore encoded in lyrics and legends of certain *sones*. Its empirical results include the endurance, euphoria, and *communitas* reported by fandango participants.

#### **IV. E. Transcendence through *communitas* and agency**

Agency exists in practices of improvisation, embodiment, pilgrimage, and dissimulation. Both individuals and communities can operate as agents. Participation in a community may be a strategy of individual agency, a choice to identify with a specific group. As few Bay Area *jaranera/os* start with Veracruz heritage or strong background in *son jarocho*, the following practices are techniques for creating identification with a community.

##### **IV. E. 1. Participation**

This strategy is important for realizing *communitas* anywhere. It is possible to



*convivir* at *son jarocho* occasions without singing, playing or dancing. In many other musical scenes, this is the only way to participate. However, at fandangos, musical participation is welcomed. This practice has forebears in constituent cultures.

...participation, a type of communal sharing, has greater import in African music than in most Western musics. Interaction is closely related to...ritual (Hester 37).

Fandangos and related occasions accommodate as many players as there are instruments available, and everyone plays the same chord patterns over and over. Twenty, thirty or more *jaranera/os* move their hands, fingers and arms in close synchronization for half an hour or more per *son*. This is astonishing, even hypnotic, to see and hear. Entrainment settles in, and players may transcend their usual levels of endurance in producing a group sound in which no one stands out, regardless of skill level. Moreover, despite the repetition, players may exert agency through subtle fillips in strumming patterns.

Singing is also participative. After a *son*'s first verse-chorus cycle, any singer may initiate the next. Because neither the order in which singers offer verses nor the specific verses they offer is set in advance, every performance of a *son* is unique. Improvisation of verses is an ultimate form of claiming agency through participation. The equal opportunity that each participant has to step forward and offer a verse also contributes to *communitas*.

In addition, *zapateado* dancing provides opportunities for non-musicians to participate. Substantial agency inheres in fandango dance procedures, particularly

today.<sup>50</sup> If you wish to dance, you may replace whomever is on the *tarima*. Restrictions apply, however. Dancers should only change places during musical interludes between sung verses, and some *sones* are danced exclusively by male/female partners while others are solely for women. Still, dancers may improvise rhythmic lines with their feet. Agency exists, while *communitas* is enhanced as more people share the experience atop the *tarima*.

Other types of participation are extra-musical. People bring free-will food and libation offerings to *son jarocho* events, and everyone partakes. They engage in *convivencia*, catching up on each others' lives between *sones*. In an occasion spent this way, everyone shares a fairly intense experience, which invites *communitas*.

#### **IV. E. 2. Norms**

Knowledge of *jaranera/o* norms confers a sense of belonging, especially because the information is often gathered casually, experientially. A new participant might not learn subtler norms for some time, after which a helpful co-reveler might whisper into her ear. If a sincere neophyte is clueless about norms, the Bay Area community will not take offense; there might be light humor and assistance. The following examples are not comprehensive, but provide a sense of Bay Area norms.

Welcoming. *Jaranera/os* attempt formally to greet all attendees upon arrival and again upon departure, by systematically proceeding around the circle of participants before engaging in other activities. This has antecedents in constituent

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<sup>50</sup> During periods in the past, however, agency was curtailed according to gendered practices. This is discussed in chapter 6's section on women.

cultures. As a form of interpersonal respect, it recalls greetings of, and by, tutelary spirits in West African rituals. It acknowledges the individuality and agency of every attendee.

Dress. Seasoned Bay Area *jaranera/os* may adopt traditional outfits--white hats and red neckerchiefs for men, long skirts and shawls for women, hard-heeled shoes for both. However, many attendees simply wear modern casual or party clothes. Agency prevails.

Offerings. As with gatherings in many cultures, it is customary, but not mandatory, to arrive at community *son jarocho* occasions with a contribution of food or drink. These may be homemade or store-bought.

Hierarchy and respect. At most occasions, tacit leadership accrues to those with recognized seniority within the tradition. This is not gender-specific, at least in the Bay Area. The leader subtly selects and begins most *sones*. Still, some decisions of when and what to play are made by casual consensus among attendees. Respect for the experts is genuine, yet subtly observed. Respect for the tradition is alternately observed and contested, given individual contexts. This is explored more in chapter 6.

Performance etiquette. When performing *sones* in traditional settings, players practice several courtesies, learned over time. Because these are cultural capital, I will not list them all here (nor do I claim to know them all.) Examples include ascending and relinquishing the *tarima* as described above. The unwritten nature of these norms is a site of oral, embodied tradition in *son jarocho*. Because this knowledge transfers as a result of participation, it distinguishes attendees of longer standing from

neophytes. Knowledge accrues through the agency of the participants as they gain experience, and thus they become more closely aligned with the community.

#### **IV. E. 3. Artisanal processes**

Stuyvesant Bearns Esteva devotes a large section of his 2011 dissertation on *son jarocho* to the practice of lutherie, the making of stringed instruments. He interviews prominent *jarana* makers, tracing historical developments in technologies of their craft. The following comments are relevant to *communitas* and agency.

Lutherie is indeed valued among *jaranera/os*. Not everyone makes her own *jarana*, but some do, and many have met the person who made theirs. Prizewinning luthier Andres Flores described making the head of his *pandero* (octagonal frame drum with cymbals) from the skin of a goat he had raised for this purpose (personal communication). Once, a Veracruzian luthier only made a *jarana* after finding the right piece of wood in the countryside. Delgado Calderón describes ritual practices of traditional lutherie, such as propitiations made to the trees to be cut for *jaranas*; week-long baptism processes for new *jaranas* at household altars; and sacrifices of chickens and goats for initiating new *tarimas* (57-9). In the Bay Area, I have witnessed a streamlined initiation of a new *tarima*.

Some seasoned *jaranera/os* eventually undertake the process of making their own instruments, working with luthiers as part of pilgrimage. In the past, luthiers spent days with a machete to hand-carve a *jarana*'s body and neck from a single piece of wood. The sanding still takes three days. This forges an embodied link of agency between musician and instrument. By eschewing mass production technologies, they

honor tradition and avoid capitalistic alienation from the means of production. The crafting of one's own instrument is an act of agency and engagement. It generates greater awareness of the inputs of musicking, not just the end product. This adds to *jaranera/os'* care for the environment, and to gratitude for the sources of the materials.

Similarly, making or proactively seeking out the handmade clothes and accessories associated with *son jarocho* involves agency. Anita González writes:

The traditional woman's dress is an expensive item, the result of hours of tedious handiwork. Dancers wear their dresses with pride, protecting them as if they were heirlooms or symbols of family honor. Towns in the state of Veracruz compete for and argue about the authenticity of their Jarocho outfits (*Afro* 130).

To have made, or to know the person who made, ones instrument or *tejido* not only exerts agency, but confers a sense of vested worthiness for *communitas*.

These artisanal processes also preserve links to component Mesoamerican and West African ritual practices. At least some peoples within both cultural complexes esteemed instruments as manifestations of divine forces, engaging in involved processes to produce them. African balaphone makers from what was once the Mande empire still enact extensive propitiations of the trees from which their instruments are made. Mayans and neo-Aztecs maintain traditions of revering their *teponahuaxtles* and *huehuetls* as gifts from the gods, upon which the security of the community depends, as well. To make traditional clothing also requires elaborate ancient techniques of hand labor. Just as *son jarocho* has been recuperated, efforts are under way to preserve weaving, embroidery and crocheting arts in the Sotavento. Similarly,

Bay Area *jaranera/os* support efforts to revive traditional healthy modes of food production and preparation, preferring to partake of the tasty results.

Such care reflects conscious agency and creates bonds between musicians, instruments, and community.

#### IV. F. Summary

Practices of dissimulation, embodiment, improvisation, repetition, and so forth, are able to promote transcendent states of joy, endurance, agency and *communitas*. If magic is the ability to effect empirical transformation without rationally explained means, it is disguised in these practices.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Luis Baltazar	(Son de la bahía) Música = Catarsis	May 24
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luis Baltazar	(Son de la bahía) Música = Comunidad	May 24
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ever Rodriguez	(Son de la bahía) Terapéutico o no, a este niño le gusta el	May 24

Fig. 13. From author's 2016 email feed: Music=Catharsis; Music=Community; Therapeutic or not

## **Chapter V: Bay Area *jaranero/as*' transcendent energy**

This chapter arrives at the core of the matter: the words of people in the Bay Area *jaranera/o* community. Interviews with eleven individuals share experiences of: seven women who embody new gender roles by organizing, teaching, performing, and furthering community through preserving tradition and supporting causes; two men who have been invaluable in forming, growing and teaching the community; and two men from outside the community who have long supported *son jarocho*'s migration to the U.S. Findings include lively ethical dynamics involving inclusivity, women's roles, activism and transcendence, as well as two special boons informing the Bay Area: the value set passed along by Maestro Artemio Posadas, and ongoing monthly offerings of fandango by Jorge and Lourdes Beltrán. Still, each community member's contribution is invaluable, so two-to-three-line sketches of about sixty people follow here, attempting to celebrate the diversity of the group. About half are age forty and over, the rest younger. Half are female, half male. Various ethnicities participate. Despite this diversity, a commonality among many is intense dedication, at times to a transcendent degree. This is explored in chapter 6. As my links to the community have grown, I have come to cross the border between academic and *jaranera*. This could lead to bias, and the words of *jaranera/os* speak for themselves, so I try to limit evaluative statements.

### **V. A. *Jaranera/os*' own words.**

Time constraints and respect for privacy made it impossible to interview large numbers of people. However, the interviews presented here cover a gamut of three

long-standing community founders and two relative newcomers, six professional musicians and five non-professionals, seven women and four men, eight Mexican or Chicana/o and three “other,” enabling an outline to form. The preponderance of women reflects the facts that women organize many of the events in the community, and that feminization is one of my topics of interest. Two interviewees are in their early thirties, four range from low to high forties, one is fifty or so, and three in their sixties. From the community are Maestro Artemio Posadas, Jorge and Lourdes Beltrán, María de la Rosa, Cassandra Millspaugh, Dolores García, Claudia Arredondo, Catherine John, and Maricarmen Arjona. In addition are two scholar-musicians from outside the community, Dan Sheehy and Francisco González.

Maestro Posadas’ influence in the Bay Area is indisputably tremendous; his words begin the story.

#### **V. A. 1. Artemio Posadas: *El son es noble.***

More than once, over two multi-hour interview sessions, Maestro Posadas makes the unsolicited comment “*El son es noble.*” *Son* is noble. Western musicologists do not frequently describe a genre as noble. They might refer to courtly music or folk music in order to identify who makes it, or they might make descriptions of structure or evaluations of beauty or elegance or roughness or quirkiness or even strangeness, but not nobility. What does Posadas mean? Recalling that Taoism links the concept of “noble” with that of “humble,” I asked the Maestro if that was true of *son*. He replied:



*Exactamente*. Noble means flexible, good people, not sharp or rude. For this reason we must coexist with *son*, not abuse it, be opportunistic or take advantage of it (translations from Spanish mine throughout interview.)<sup>51</sup>

The term *son*, in other words, signifies much to the maestro. It includes an art form, its practitioners, and core community values. It is hence somewhat coded, yet loaded with import coming from a person who is seen by many as the leader and original teacher of Bay Area *jaranera/os*. How did his esteem of *son* arise? Consider Posadas' own history. He began to play *son* during the 1970's. As a teen, he had moved from



Fig. 14. Maestro Posadas with harp, October 26, 2002 *San Jose Mercury News*. He has changed little.

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<sup>51</sup> Compare to verse 68 of the Tao te Ching: "...a noble warrior is never angered; a noble conqueror never faces an enemy; a noble leader stays beneath the people he wields; this is called the integrity of peacefulness..." or verse 39 "...therefore the humble is the root of the noble...".

the Huastecan countryside of San Luis Potosí, where his father played the style of *son* called *arribeño*, to the state capital. At the University of San Luis Potosí there, Juan Antonio Almendarez was leading a group studying traditional music; he invited Posadas to join.

He had a big room where he gave us *huapangueras* (large bass lutes of the Huastecan region), violins, accordions, *jaranas*, everything! We just grabbed one and started learning, and he brought in specialist instructors from Mexico City.

*Which instrument did you choose to learn first?*

The violin. In the Huasteca, it is the main melody instrument. In *son jarocho*, the violin is just another instrument.<sup>52</sup>

The Huasteca includes northern Veracruz, San Luis Potosí, southern Tamaulipas, and parts of Hidalgo, Puebla, Querétaro, and Guanajuato. Almendarez took his students into the field to experience the *son* of different locations and practices of indigenous Huastecans such as a Mayan group known as the Tenek.

He took us to see *huapangero* groups, the trios, from different regions of La Huasteca, such as Tampico and Valles, and to *danzas* and weddings in indigenous communities, where he knew Tenek people.

Posadas came to greatly admire Tenek traditional arts.

We listened to how they sang and played and just loved it. I started to practice, and to learn. I was not a music major, but enjoyed learning. I was about seventeen.

When Susan Cashion and Ramos Morones, directors of the San Jose folklórico troupe Los Lupeños, came to San Luis Potosí, they met Posadas and invited him and other

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<sup>52</sup> Later, when Posadas studied harp, his instructor was Mario Barradas.

musicians to the U.S. He stayed for several weeks sharing the practices of *son* he had learned, then returned to Mexico. They invited him back several times. Meanwhile, he was attempting to find funding for his musical research in Mexico.

I first came to do presentations with Los Lupeños, at the World Expo at Spokane, Washington, 1973 (sic.) We came here from Huasteca with violin, harps, etc. We stayed for probably two weeks, but then we were invited again in 1974 for three months. And then, they invited me again in 1975 for two weeks, and so on.

When I was working in San Luis Potosí (teaching at the *Instituto Potosina de Bellas Artes*), I asked the government for money to research in La Huasteca, not only the *huapangueros* (*son huasteco* players) but also indigenous communities. I asked for a long time, but they didn't accept my projects. Yet when I came to San Jose, they supported me with the money for them, the travel, the cameras, the videos, the musicians, etc. And I was getting to know a lot of people here.

So by August 1979, I decided to move here. And that was it. Afterwards, when I began to work and mount performances, I did research in Mexico, but I was living here. It was like destiny turned me around and even though now I had the money for my work, I was here... The original plan was not that, it was to return to México.

Posadas' career has included grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council, and performances at the Library of Congress and Smithsonian Folk Festival.<sup>53</sup> These represented time and hard work. Early on, he formed groups with artists like Russell Rodriguez, Ruben Killinsworth, and Rick Mendoza. One was *El Tamunal*, named for a Huastecan village.

I had a trio that played *jarocho* and *huasteco*, called *El Tamunal*. I started working as a custodian and also performing. Before 1982 the group was named *Los Trovadores*, with Russell, Ruben, Rick and other musicians. But then I stopped (participating) for a year, so Noe Montoya, another musician,

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<sup>53</sup> In 2016 he received an NEA National Heritage fellowship along with the Bess Lomax Hawes award for efforts in preserving and disseminating traditional music.

went forward with a group called *Alma Tropical*. *El Tamunal* then formed to play weddings and performances.

Online archives document performances at Stanford, UCSC, etc. In the 1990s, Posadas began teaching at the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts in Richmond, in the northeast Bay Area. He founded the group *Son de la Tierra* there.

*Los Cenzontles* (another prominent non-profit folkloric organization in the northeast Bay) was born at the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts. There I gave them some workshops in *huapango* and harp classes; later they decided to form their own academy.

Posadas' teaching responsibilities led him to de-emphasize performing.

In Richmond, I teach on Fridays and Saturdays: *versos*, *zapateado*, *instrumentos*, singing. I've been there for 24 years. Eventually I decided it was not good to teach on Fridays and Saturdays in Richmond and then drive fast to Santa Cruz or Gilroy for another gig. It wasn't working. So now I just play and teach at the center. (OK, well, tomorrow we are going to play a gig in Gilroy. But I don't want to promote our trio. It's like having two bosses, it's not good.)

This sense of ethical priorities appears elsewhere in Posadas' discussions. Other projects that arose may also have factored into his de-prioritization of performing commercially.

Ten or fifteen years ago, the California Arts Council made me Artist-in-Residence. They gave me money to teach, and since I worked in a center of career training (CTC)<sup>54</sup> where there were many Hispanic students, it became my sponsor. I needed a name for the program so I picked *El Mosquito*. I finished with the Arts Council after a couple of years, but some musicians stayed with me, as did the name. We wanted to change it, but many people knew us as *El Mosquito*, as we had performed with that name. Jorge (Beltrán, see below) was in *El Mosquito*; so were Hector, Margarita, Isidro, and more...that is where we met.

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<sup>54</sup> He worked as a custodian. In our Spanish interview, my Western-conditioned mindset about teachers so little expected this that when he said "custodio" I thought he had said "historian." However it recalls the above observations about nobility equating to humility.

Many more projects followed. In 2002, Posadas hosted an international colloquium of artists and scholars called *Encuentro del Son 2002: La Influencia Africana en el Son de México*. The maestro also taught at numerous schools in the Bay Area. More recently, in conjunction with Rodriguez' role at ACTA and the special interest in *son* of Dan Sheehy, former Director of Smithsonian Folkways Records, Posadas has traveled to Washington D.C. to perform and record at the Library of Congress. He brought with him his mentee Dolores García, who, like Sheehy, is interviewed later in this chapter. Similar to many members of the *son* community in the Bay, García deeply respects the Maestro. His influence bears aspects of his values and beliefs.

*I am interested in the leadership roles that have been taken by certain women in the Bay Area. They feel that you have given them great encouragement. Why, or how, do you believe that women artists have arrived to prominence here?*

I believe the role of women in every field—economic, political, artistic, whatever—should be the same, should be equal. Women like Lolis (Dolores García), Maria (de la Rosa), Cassandra (Millspaugh), Lourdes (Beltrán), among others, are needed to spread *son*. We need to spread *son* through everyone, to every locality. The field (the potential for practice and spread of *son*) is so big! It's not necessary to be a professional musician.

*Today, many soneros are also activists. Is this true of you? Why or why not?*

In my case, I would say no. You need conviction, and to me my mission is what I have been doing. I also don't have time, because of my activities as a runner.

*You have many marathon and half-marathon medals. Why do you like to run?*

Distance running involves giving another step even when you feel exhausted. That discipline encourages me to do more other projects, even when I feel tired. I play better and accomplish more if I run. I started running when I was quite young.

*Why do you think that son jarocho is played more in activist events than son huasteco? I mean, why do the activists play it more?*

Because there are more players, more rhythms, more differences between the *sones jarochos*. I also think it is coincidence that they just started playing it first.

*Do you believe there is an inherent conflict between community music projects and commercial performing endeavors undertaken by community members?*

*Son* is noble. It is greater than individual projects. Where it is from, we are just a small part of the *son*. We have everything because the *son* exists. If you want to play *son* for audiences who don't know it, that is fine.<sup>55</sup> But you should go to the fandango, the *huapango*, the fandango *mariachero*. If you want to play *son*, you should go to these. That is where we learn everything and give everything.

In regard to the importance of the fandango, Posadas' wife, Vicky, who attended our interview, commented:

The truth is, in some ways it seems fewer Mexicans like traditional arts than people in the United States, who have more passion for them, I believe.

The maestro offered an explanation to both his and her comments:

What it is, is that in Mexico, as well as here, there are many "ballets" (Ballet Folklóricos) that are not the same thing as a *fandango*. They are the opposite ... instead of people all dancing together in a large space, they enact a pre-designed scene... but what we wish to promote is the type of *fiesta huapanguera* (fandango) in which people dance... freely. That is the difference... The difference between ballet and traditional *son* is that in the latter, everyone participates, even if you are not playing, dancing or singing. Your participation and expression is more real, more relaxed, not as plastic.

Recall how participation functions as a technique of transcendence.

*One local sonero told me that before he played son, he danced in an Aztec guild where he had some transcendental experiences. Do you prefer the baile (social dance) or the danza (more formalized ritual or performative dance, often indigenous) and do you believe that the transcendent is available in one more than the other?*

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<sup>55</sup> At another time, Posadas commented that he is not particularly drawn to a number of the recent fusion projects that mix *son jarocho* with other genres; he feels that the *son* genres already have noble and diverse roots, and plenty of potential for variety through traditional practices and improvisation.

I need more information about *danza azteca*. Being an empire, Aztecs had several peoples under their dominion, such as the Tenek. These (the Tenek, etc.) are the real people. Their traditions interest me. They “have” nothing, some do not even have teeth, but they follow their traditions. *Los Cuevas del Viento y la Fertilidad* is a very special place they visit for some of their important rituals.

At this point, we viewed some film footage of Tenek village rituals that Posadas has taken through the years. The happiness and selfless dedication on the faces of many participants was evident, as was a sense that they were not used to being filmed. The dance steps were focused, the colorful garments carefully wrought for the occasion.

*What advice would you give to a beginner of son jarocho?*

Take it seriously. Preserve it and pass it on. Go to fandangos. You can start fandangos.

*What advice would you give to an academic who is studying son?*

Observe what you can here, and compare it with interviews with *soneros* from Veracruz. Try to find out if there is a difference between fandangos here and there. Rafael Figueroa is writing a book about the difference between fandangos in different communities. In some places musicians don't wait to sing because they want to put their verses forward, which means the dancers do not have a chance to do much before they have to start *mudanzas* (silent footwork that allows the words to be heard). Some places so many *jaranas* play so loudly that it is hard for a vocalist or improviser to be heard over them. Also, see if the *sones* change over a period of time, if they develop new verses, etc. Also, I wish that the academics would have a way to check whether what they write is correct.

*(Here I promised to check my writeup with the Maestro before publication.) What musicians do you most admire?*

Posadas deliberated, then answered, “Some wonderful musicians that I have met in little villages.” He could have named any number of well-known artists with whom he has enjoyed performing. But his ethic, when practicing, preserving, and

transmitting the tradition, is that *son* is noble, and pertains to the people who practice it with respect. A 2002 *San Jose Mercury News* article reported:

Posadas is drawn to (Tenek villages)...because of their sense of community and spiritual links to the earth. He doesn't mind that the village has no electricity and just a stream for running water... 'it's like magic,' he says (de la Viña, 2F).

The same article cited Jordan Simmons, Artistic Director of the East Bay Center for Performing Arts, who traveled with Posadas to a Tenek village. He observed that the Maestro was the happiest he had ever seen him there, where the music and dance went on all night. The article quoted the Maestro as hoping to retire there, where he regularly sent money to support traditional arts. I asked whether that has changed.

Well, Jordan Simmons and I still send money to the Tenek that live in the community of Tam-Ale-Tom that belongs to Tancanhuitz, for their museum or for when they have their ceremonies. I would like to pass the rest of my life there, but there is insecurity, so I have decided to remain here while helping the ethnic groups that have helped me to know something of their traditions.

Maestro continues to perform, teach, and head up numerous fandangos in the Bay Area. He also continues to run miles daily:

Every morning Posadas retreats to Rancho San Antonio County Park near Los Altos, where he runs for six miles. He writes new *son* verses in his head while exercising in surroundings that remind him of Tantocoy, the mountain near Chununtzen (a Tenek community) (de la Viña 2F).

As of this writing, his most recent marathon was in Oakland, 2017. Even as Posadas has had to postpone his dreams, his deeds have the nobility of the *son* he reveres. A renowned artist, he did not need to welcome me as he did to his studio—with abundant time, patience, and generous sharing of artifacts such as the pictures attached. His wife, Vicky, welcomed me with marvelous refreshments prepared in the



Potosina style. She photographs every occasion she attends if *son* is practiced, and when posted on social media, they promote continuity of community.

The nobility of *son* extends, thus, beyond the genre to its practitioners and core community values. It includes humility, dedication, perseverance, generosity and respect, as the Maestro teaches by example. In June 2016, he was awarded the National Endowment for the Arts' highest honor in Folk and Traditional Arts: that of Bess Lomax Hawes National Heritage Fellow—a most deserved award!



Fig. 15. Maestro finishes another marathon, leading a pack. From his studio.

### **V. A. 2. Jorge and Lourdes Beltrán: *Son* is not a show, it is *convivencia*.**

As of this writing, the Beltráns have held nearly one hundred monthly fandangos in their home! They gave their interview together, so it is presented that way. They are an attractive couple, she tall and radiant, he dark and dashing, both setting the ultimate standard of dress for fandangos. We met at my home to talk and have a meal (as is customary in *jarocho* get-togethers.)



Fig. 16. Los Beltrán. They shared this recent photo.

Sra. Beltrán practiced folklórico during high school in the cosmopolitan city of La Paz, Baja California. Always a fan of music and the arts, she met Jorge Beltrán, a native of Coatepec, Veracruz (just outside of the capital city, Xalapa), after moving to the Bay Area. Although Jorge never played *son jarocho* while living in Veracruz, he was a performing musician in a heavy metal band when the couple met. Lourdes accompanied him on tour. The band was named “Thares” after an ancient Mesoamerican concept of an aspect of the human soul. Asked about the origin of his interest in Mesoamerican culture, Jorge says:

The band members were interested in a number of ancient *mexica* concepts. They incorporated them into the music, and we discussed them, and that is how we came to Aztec dance, or *danza mexica*.

The couple found mutual interest in a *calpulli mexica* (group of families or guild interested in Aztec culture) based in San Jose, and engaged in its rigorous practices for some time. Meetings involved all night dancing, similar to *mitote* traditions of indigenous Mexico. The results of such strenuous efforts often include self-mastery of

physical limits, and exhilaration based in part on release of endorphins. Sr. Beltrán describes one extraordinary experience he had as a result of this extended dancing, reminiscent of those sometimes reported by distance runners. (Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that he has since taken up running, along with Maestro Posadas and others in the community.) During their involvement with the Aztec *calpulli* the Beltráns married, celebrating with a traditional all-night *mitote*.

It was at a sacred spot on a reservation and we had to get special permission. We brought our *calpulli* with us, (some *fandanguera/os*) and everyone. Our leader led the ceremony. It was very very dry, and the area was covered by oak trees but very dusty. We started to dance and I (Jorge) was putting all of my energy into the dance. The dust was rising and suddenly I realized...

Sr. Beltrán goes on to describe the extraordinary affects he experienced, reminiscent of those associated with historical *mitotes*.

*Had you taken any substances, for example peyote?*

No, nothing like that. I had gone to the *temazcal* (sweat lodge) and done the fire and water ceremony...but nothing like peyote. Just the power of the dance. It was really the dancing that did it.

*Why did you end your involvement with the calpulli?*

The leader had decided to stop. He did not like the politics pressuring him and other *calpullis* to perform the Aztec dance as a show. It is the same as Artemio; he does not play the *sones* in order to put on a show; he does it in order for people to participate and enjoy, to *convivir*...still, we went back recently to dance the *huehuetl* and brought our son, who liked it a lot.

During the early 2000's, some friends from the *calpulli* met Maestro Posadas. They became interested in his offer to teach them *son jarocho* and other types of traditional *son*, began to study at the El Mosquito location, and invited the Beltráns to participate. Meanwhile, these same people began to get together informally, but

regularly, to listen to music on weekend evenings, and to *convivir*. These casual gatherings grew and evolved into a fandango *del mes* hosted by the Beltráns.

This fandango has convened every month for eight years—nearly one hundred times. Anyone who has given a party knows that a commitment of that level is substantial, even without the day jobs, child-rearing, and many creative activities that take place at the Beltrán household. (Sr. paints murals and raises a flock of colorful finches, Sra. is a fine cook, seamstress, decorator, etc.) At the fandangos, Sr. and Sra. serve as leading singers, players and dancers. They also dress carefully for whichever regional style of *son* is celebrated on a particular night. Most of the fandangos feature *son jarocho*, with many players surrounding a few dancers, brimmed hats, traditionally-made shirts and blouses, full skirts with petticoats, and *rebozos* (traditional shawls.) Some fandangos offer *son huasteco*, from the Huasteca region north of *jarocho* country, with many dancers and a trio of players. *Mariachero* fandangos feature *sones* from central Mexico and Jalisco, huarache sandals, and the highest *tarima*. Regardless of the regional variety of *son* practiced, a lavish assortment of foods available includes traditional dishes. As I often see Sra. in the kitchen before dancing, singing and playing, I have to ask:

*How do you do it? Who helps?*

I grew up in a house that was always full of people. We were twelve brothers and sisters. My mother couldn't do the laundry for all of us so we each did our own—and we did not have a washing machine, just the *cuenca de lavandería* (outdoor washbasin and scrubbing board.) So I like, I really like, to have my house full of people. Also, (my school-age son) helps me clean up in advance, because he is always happy when he realizes it is fandango day. I make rice and beans, and others bring other dishes.

*Does anyone help you clean up?*

No, not officially. Of course some people pitch in. But either way, I don't mind.

Typical attendance might range from twenty-five to thirty-five people. Yet Sr. Beltrán points out that generous hospitality is part of Mexican culture. He tells of a syncretic tradition in the town of Xico, not far from his Veracruz hometown:

The ceremony for Santa Magdalena lasts two weeks in the summer and involves everybody in the community dressing the *santa* (saint) and taking her from house to house each day. Whichever house has her has to provide food for *hundreds* of people, for everyone in the town. It is considered an honor. They make beautiful sawdust paintings that line the road that leads up the hill to the church, as the saint is carried up there. They have fireworks and partying for two weeks. Of course what started this was that the (indigenous) people had had their ways and then the other people came (Spanish, Catholic) and told them that they weren't right, this other thing was right. So the people started doing what the other people told them to do, but to them it still meant what it used to mean.

Thus, ever since ancient times, providing for the community was not only a norm, but an honor. It was and is a combined effort of persons and tasks, of perseverance and tolerance. If I were issuing evaluative statements, I might say it is noble, as defined by Maestro Posadas and Lao Tzu. I asked Sra. Beltrán:

*I see you as doing a tremendous service for the community, do you?*

Although it is not the way we think of it, I suppose that we do a service to the community because we are keeping the traditions alive and transmit what we are learning to others, especially to younger generations.

*How do you define community?*

For me, community is: a group of people from different backgrounds and positions who come together to enjoy the same things.

*(To both) Do you consider yourselves activists?*

Activists? I am not sure, but if being an activist is defending what you believe in and your roots, then I think we are.

*Why, especially when Maestro has such strong Huastecan ties, has son jarocho become the style of son most played in the Bay Area community?*

In *son jarocho*, everyone plays, so it is easier. In *son huasteco*, only one set of musicians plays, so you have to be very good because if you make a mistake everyone will hear, and if the *son* lasts a long time you have to be good enough to be able to keep going.

If I were making evaluative statements, I might surmise that all-night *mitote* dancing is a great qualification for playing *son huasteco* and *jarocho*. I mention Ochoa Serrano's book *Mitote, Fandango y Mariacheros*, much cited here, and Sr. Beltrán's answer surprises me:

Oh yes, we have met him. He came and stayed at the house with us a few years ago.

It stands to reason. Los Beltrán are all about hospitality, *mitote*, and fandango!

### **V. A. 3. Maria de la Rosa. There is so much to learn, so much depth.**



Fig. 17. Ms. de la Rosa.

Maria de la Rosa was the first person I met in the Bay Area *son jarocho* community. She was acting as impresario for *jarocho* musician Andrés Flores, touring from Veracruz. I met her after a performance by Flores at UCSC. She added me to her email list, and soon we were planning one of his workshops together. We

have interacted frequently and, although we did sit down in my home to discuss her background, many of the comments here are from casual conversations over the past several years.

A native of San Jose, California, Ms. de la Rosa grew up listening to Mexican music on her parent's records of Mexican *sones* and *canciones*. She always loved the arts, but as a child, dance and music classes were not as accessible as they are now, so her passion turned first to drawing and other "affordable" arts. As there were, however, free community and in-school sports teams, she received more training in athletics than in the arts.

She earned a Bachelor's degree in History and Spanish and a Master's degree in Education from Stanford University, where she took classes in ballet folklórico with Susan Cashion and Ramón Morones. It was her first opportunity to take formal dance training. As soon as she started she "was hooked and knew (she) wanted to keep doing it." She particularly liked the fact that everything she loved:

...was combined into one activity: music, dance, movement/physicality/athleticism (takes a lot of coordination to do footwork and skirtwork!), culture, Spanish language, history.

In 1989, after finishing her undergraduate degree, Ms. de la Rosa joined the folklórico troupe Los Lupeños de San José, to continue studying and performing the traditional folk arts she had begun plying at Stanford. Through these activities, she came to meet Maestro Posadas, as well as Mexican dancers and musicians of many genres.

In 1991, I had my first contact with traditional *son jarocho zapateado* of the fandango by participating in a week-long intensive folk dance conference in Xalapa, Veracruz. The maestra/os were Ernesto Luna and his wife, who are from a long lineage of *son jarocho* artists and practitioners.

Ms. de la Rosa also participated in many of the community fandangos in the Bay Area that Maestro Posadas organized with Gilberto Gutiérrez of Mono Blanco, who was on a residency in California during the 1990s. This included an intensive period of study with Gutiérrez and Los Lupeños that resulted in a stage performance of *sones jarocho* in the fandango tradition in 1994.

*Did you study with any women who come from Mexico to teach?*

In 2004, Annahi Hernandez, of renowned jarocho group Son de Madera, came and taught *zapateado* for a residency.

In 2006, Ms. de la Rosa hosted Liche Oseguera for a residency, which provided her first opportunity to play the *jarana* and sing. Shortly thereafter, she began to study with Maestro Posadas. In 2009, she was invited to East Bay Center for the Performing Arts as a performer and faculty member, and had more opportunity to study with him.

So, over the course of the past twenty years, but more and more during the last eight or so, I've had opportunity to develop close alliances with both local artists and Veracruzans virtuosos such as Rubí and Liche Oseguera, Andrés Flores, and Patricio Hidalgo. This has opened doors to opportunities to visit Veracruz and participate in *son jarocho* traditions in a familial context within communities that have been practicing within their families for generations. It has also opened the doors to working on projects—staged performances—both in Mexico and in the Bay Area with some of these artists.

A few years ago, Ms. de la Rosa put together her performing group, Día Pa' Son (which translates “day for *son*,” “fretboard,” and “organ pipes.”) Originally having named “SonRisas” (another pun on *son*, smiles and laughter), she says:

It was unintentional that the group's first lineup was all women, however, outsiders then assumed it was an exclusively women's group and would often ask for the “all women's group.” It was a sign that women's presence in *son jarocho* performance was growing in the Bay Area.



In the past, Ms. De la Rosa had noticed signs of resistance to female leadership of performance groups:

Female leadership was virtually non-existent in those days. Perhaps they were just normal growing pains, but either way, it was in these times that colleagues, male and female, inside and outside of the community, were instrumental in supporting DíaPaSon's growth and continuance.

Key early performances were at the DeYoung Museum, under the auspices of the Mexican Consulate featuring Liche Oseguera and Rubí Oseguera Rueda, and at Oakland Museum of California, for Day of the Dead festivities. In 2013, the group's new name DíaPa'Son debuted during a twelve-show run that featured only three performers, including guest artist maestro Andrés Flores. Later that year, the group, now with five local performers, brought down the house at the 2013 San Francisco *Son Jarocho* Festival at the Brava theater. De la Rosa's 2014 PAZ: Fandango Urbano project, funded by grants she wrote, included five local DíaPaSon artists and three master artists from Veracruz. The group continues to perform throughout the Bay Area and beyond with lineups of local artists and, when the opportunity arises, visiting master artists from Veracruz.

*Would you care to comment on what differences exist for women in the jaranera/o community in the Bay?*

It has changed over time, and I think this is due to mutual and concerted efforts on the parts of men and women artists on both sides of the border. Historically, there haven't been many women musicians and even less that were part of performing ensembles and even less who were in leadership roles—none as formal leaders of groups.

*Why?*

I attribute this to several things: The historical practice of *son jarocho* in Veracruz itself--women were dancers and singers, but rarely if ever, *jaraneras*

or other musicians. Also, in cultural interchanges between Veracruz and the Bay Area that took place in the late 80s (and) early 90s, women *son jarocho* artists never traveled on their own to do residencies here in the Bay Area and they were practically never on tour on their own—only as part of male-led ensembles. In addition, as in many professions, much of the music industry is dominated by men and there is no difference in the traditional arts community of the Bay Area. In my experience, it has been possible to be brushed aside or discounted or to feel that your voice is not heard when you are a woman artist.

*Yes, I have heard this and experienced it elsewhere. Yet now women are emerging as leaders. So what has changed?*

As the revival of *son jarocho* has taken place in Veracruz, more and more women musicians have emerged and, in addition to women dancers and singers, it is common to see *jaraneras*—although it is still rare to see women playing the other instruments or in a leadership role of a group—in Veracruz. And, as of the turn of this century, some women are traveling on their own doing residencies, performing, and leading groups and artistic projects.

As I think back over my own personal experience, I see how these changes have also taken place here in the Bay Area, how they only could have taken place through direct action on the part of *sonera/os* both here and in Veracruz through a sustained cultural exchange and dialogue, and how I have undoubtedly been inspired artistically and personally by these changes in the role of women in *son jarocho* performance.

In 2006, local *jaranera/os*, led by male musicians, opened the door for and promoted Annahi Hernandez' residency. I think this was the first time a woman *son jarocho* artist was here on her own, giving classes and participating in the local music scene. I went to as many of her classes as possible, traveling weekly from San Jose to Oakland or San Francisco in order to learn from her. Personally speaking, her residency inspired me to continue growing as a dancer and musician and in leadership roles, with or without the support of our male colleagues.

Maestro Artemio was one of those who supported me—as I believe he always supported other women artists. He was instrumental in providing me instruction and encouraging my growth as a musician, to develop alliances with international artists and to pursue leadership roles, thereby treating me as equally capable in many ways.

Among the international artists with whom I have been fortunate to work, Rubí Oseguera Rueda became a great friend. She was one of the first *soneras* to branch out and create her own projects. In 2011, when La Peña in Berkeley

offered me the opportunity to develop a transnational project, I jumped at the chance to approach her. PAZ: Proyecto A Zapatear was the resulting collaboration. Up until that time, projects had focused on music and by default, were led and directed by men, but this project was designed and led by women and focused on *zapateado*, which meant that predominantly women artists participated in the project. The PAZ: Fandango Urbano project in 2014 was the next stage of that project and I am now currently in the middle of the third stage.

Prior to these changes reaching my corner of the world, female role models in the traditional arts community were few. I admired Susan Cashion, María Luisa Colmenárez and Gabriela Shiroma, but they were not *son jarocho* artists and only Gabriela is an instrumentalist as well as dancer.

I think, because of the progressive attitudes of plenty of Bay Area women artists, their female colleagues who supported their work, and the progressive attitudes of some key male colleagues, doors have been opened and conditions have developed such that there are now a number of female *son jarocho* community members in leadership roles and more female instrumentalists than there were even four years ago.

Ms. de la Rosa's group has embraced a fluidity of personnel, similar to other *son jarocho* groups both here and abroad. Despite her extensive knowledge and growing success, she says:

I still feel like I'm always trying to catch up. There is so much to learn, especially so much depth to the lyrics. On the surface it sounds simple but it is quite involved.

I spoke to her the week after the 2013 Festival performance, asking whether the exhilaration or the exhaustion had subsided yet. She smiled and said:

It was a lot of work. We are still trying to figure out how to be adequately staffed.

She did not bask in the glory of having triumphed onstage, but rather discussed the entire occasion and all of her activities as a whole. The event required willingness and ability to multi-task—teacher one day, performer the night before, administrator and

logician intermittently, chauffeur of visiting artists throughout—to bring about what is still being birthed as a community tradition. This non-discriminatory engagement with tasks that would be seen as alternatively exalted or lowly in a Western or capitalist worldview, exemplifies Maestro Posadas’ nobility of the humble, and humility necessary to be noble. Another comment that Ms. de la Rosa made, just in passing, further illustrates. On this occasion, she was giving a workshop for my family, to help us to learn *son jarocho*. I asked permission to record, and she said:

I would rather you not record. It could get in the way of your learning.

This was a direct nod to the tradition of transmitting the genre orally, which enables learning to be embodied rather than merely cognized (as takes place when recording or taking notes postpones internalization of knowledge to a later time.) After another workshop, I mention how athletic the dance to the *son* “Los Enanos” is—the performers adopt a squatting posture for lively steps—and she says “Yes, but I’ve seen people in their nineties who still do it.”

Such endurance comes from the active physicality found also in distance running and rural life. Ms. de la Rosa’s respect for tradition is reflected in the way she introduced the *son* “La Guacamaya” at a Dia Pa’ Son performance:

The themes of the *sones jarochos* reflect the values and beliefs of the community from which they came. As an example, “La guacamaya,” about a macaw bird having to leave its home due to environmental change, one of the older *sones* that has been passed down for many generations, reminds listeners of the importance of environmental preservation—if we destroy the trees, we will also lose the beautiful macaw bird who makes them her home.

In light of her respect for tradition, in 2014 de la Rosa received grant funding for a project to compose new *sones* in collaboration with Veracruz artists Patricio

Hidalgo, Rubí Oseguera, and Liche Oseguera. (Similar projects have followed through at least 2016.) The new works maintain traditional elements of *son* while treating themes relevant to the urban setting of the Bay Area: The California Gold Rush, the immigrant experience, food justice and the challenges of raising children in a modern urban setting--coded political commentary.

Recently, Ms. de la Rosa was invited to be a resident artist at La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley. She has developed year-round *son jarocho* programming which includes workshops, recitals by participants, concerts, fandangos and traditional ritual celebrations such as Día de los Muertos and La Rama, attracting new members to the community. She is also teaching *son* in public schools and universities.

I did not ask whether Ms. de la Rosa is an activist. Her presence at activist and humanitarian occasions that involve *son jarocho*, as well as at many non-profit performances, is unailing. She also makes each such occasion an opportunity to teach about culture, history and tradition, always encouraging others. When we first met, I had expressed my lifelong clumsiness with plucked stringed instruments. She merely said “Four years ago I felt the same way. But I started and you can do it too!”

#### **V. A. 4. Cassandra Millspaugh. It’s the beauty.**



Fig. 18. Ms. Millspaugh shared this recent photo.

Cassandra Millspaugh came to *son jarocho* about a decade ago through Tere Saydak, one of her students at the University of San Francisco, where she teaches Spanish. Ms. Millspaugh had been studying West African dance (as did grammy-winning *jaranera*/scholar Martha Gonzalez and this author), and playing acoustic guitar in styles from Punk Rock to Nueva Trova. She also has enjoyed participating in a gospel choir, lindy hop, and Buddhist meditation.

*What attracted you most to son jarocho?*

Most of my early experience was playing in and around the Bay Area with friends Tere and Dionisia with whom I felt a great community bond. The community was smaller back then but very fun. When I first started playing *jarana* and going to fandangos, Salvador (Chava) Garcia was always there helping with *acordes* and making everyone feel welcome and included. He is still an important part of the community and still is always there helping newbies. My first official *zapateado* class was at the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts about ten years ago with Lolis and Nydia. I also took some classes there with Artemio Posadas. These classes were a great addition to the knowledge that I was gaining in the community.

Over the years Ms. Millspaugh has taken classes with many maestros both from Veracruz and the U.S. and has attended workshops both in Veracruz and EEUU. This has been flavored by the fact that (like me) she looks like a gringa, due to Irish and Jewish ancestry. She has worked hard, thus, to be fully accepted within the *jaranera/o* community--whether the impetus was internal or external.

Still, she is now recognized as a leader, both artistically and organizationally. She knows a wide repertoire, has helped craft her own instruments in Veracruz lutheries, writes *son* verses, is one of the few women who have taken up *requinto*, and hosts a free monthly *son jarocho* workshop, “*Domingo de Son*,” in San Francisco. Between teaching, hiking, choir rehearsals, dance practices, meditation, and foreign

travel grants, she finds time to attend lots of activist and social *jarocho* events around the Bay Area, and perform at both charity and paid occasions. She seems to be a fountain of energy.

*Given some of the natural obstacles that arise from having non-Latino ancestry, why have you become so devoted to son jarocho? What keeps you dedicated?*

Hmmm. Well... really... it's the beauty. Not only the artistic beauty, but also the beauty of the community dynamics that transcend mundane conflicts through the fandango. Yes that makes sense, it's the beauty, the community, the inclusiveness, the music. Maybe it's something born of *el campo* (the field, the country, the farm) inside us all or at least inside of me. I do come from a long line of *campesino* family, mostly in the Irish/Swedish side. It goes back many generations, as far back as I know, all the way to Europe at least to my great, great grandparents. It's long line of country folk, farmers, peasants.

*In the course of the decade you've spent around son jarocho, would you be willing to discuss the sort of conflicts that might come up?*

I wouldn't speak of anyone's personal business. Conflicts are a natural result of community as it processes changes from both within and outside. However, in our community, conflicts seem to resolve themselves because there are always more important things, and more fun things, to do.

If I were making evaluative statements, I might refer to this dynamic as magical.

**V. A. 5. Dolores García. It was more important to me than school or career.**



Fig. 19. Ms. García uses this photo widely.

Ms. García and I got together, at last, in a café in Oakland after she taught one of her lively *zapateado* classes (which are real workouts.) Her schedule had been so

packed that it had taken months to find a time slot. She works at the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts with Maestro Posadas, where she mounts a monthly fandango, which brings, among others, a generation of teens into the community. Ms. García plays many instruments in multiple Mexican styles, dances and vocalizes. This versatility multiplies the number of gigs she plays. She leads a performing group, Tarimba, in conjunction with violinist Kyla Danysh, and a revolving set of other musicians. In her early thirties, she has a fresh, enthusiastic, eye-catching yet serious quality, and the ready smile rarely leaves her face as she tells her story.

*How did you get started with music?*

My mom is from Mezcala de los Romeros, Jalisco, a very small town where there was only one church, no hospitals; and my dad is from Juchipila, Zacatecas, close to the border of Jalisco. They met in high school in Daly City. We lived there in an apartment: my sister, me, my mom and dad. When mom got pregnant again, we weren't going to fit in the apartment so we moved to Richmond.

I was in third grade, but the classroom in Richmond was very different. It was like moving from third grade to kindergarten...the alphabet letters were on the wall...From then through high school the education was not good, there were a lot of substitute teachers and teachers who were not fully credentialed. I thought, "What is happening?" It was a hard time...

*Is that why you got started playing music?*

My mom loves music. I remember getting a keyboard for Christmas when I was five, and my sister and I would play with it. There was a guitar, but it wasn't really touched. Then when we moved to Richmond I started taking music class at school. I wanted saxophone but they didn't have it so I chose flute. The next year I wanted to learn violin, so the teacher recommended the East Bay Center. During group violin lessons there, my mom noticed there was a Mexican music and dance program and that's how we met Maestro Artemio.

*How old were you?*



I was ten.

*Which Mexican genre did you learn first?*

Maestro started off with Huastecan music so I was learning the violin while my sister was learning the *jarana huasteca*. Then I noticed there were dance classes being offered, and my mom said, “do you want to take them?” and I said “yes.” There were genres I had never even heard of. All my life my dad listened to rock, pop, disco...Abba (laughs.) Saturdays were listening to Abba and cleaning up the house. The Mexican music my dad listened to was mariachi and romantic *boleros*, nothing I ever wanted to learn. But this was different.

Then I saw Maestro playing the harp, and I said “I also want to learn to play the harp, and the *guitarra de son*, and...” (laughs again.) And that’s how I started learning musical traditions that I didn’t know existed in Mexico.

For a long time when I was playing *son huasteco* I liked playing, but the singing was so hard I wouldn’t sing it. I couldn’t do the falsetto notes, it was very frustrating (laughs.) But I finally reached a point where I had to try.

Some of the teachers who were teaching at the East Bay Center had left, and I had become Maestro’s helper and knew I had to do this stuff, or else no one else would do it, or they would look at me thinking “you don’t know what you’re doing.”

*How did you begin teaching the traditions?*

The first dancing teacher was Rosa, but she left, and then Nydia (Algazzali González) came to the Center and taught...she was like the female lead there, for a while...

When Nydia left I realized “OK, I have to step up to the plate and do some teaching. I’m not just a teacher’s aide any more.” By that time I was in my early twenties. So I started teaching after-school programs.

*Then it just unfolded over the years?*

With a lot of work, and changes. The other thing that was very inspiring for me was going to Mexico and being in the communities with the musicians in their elements. You only can learn so much here, because the culture is different than in their country. Going to the Huasteca and to the Sotavento gave me another boost of energy, made me feel that I want to continue, to learn these things, try different things.

*What part of the Huasteca did you visit?*

In northern Veracruz we went to Orizaba, Pánuco, Tam-ale-Tom..... I had a *limpieza*, (ritual cleansing ceremony), went into the cave, we had a *zacahuil* (huge ceremonial tamal). There was a ceremony for three ladies, one was turning fifteen and the other two maybe younger, so we went to the first cave, but they went up to another cave. Later we went up higher into the mountains and there was an older man playing his small hand-made harp.

*Was it a European harp?*

No, it was very small, and they made it themselves. I don't know what it was called.

Ms. Garcia mentions several other places they went, including a number of towns in southern Veracruz' *jarocho* country: Coatzacoalcos, Tlacotalpan, Jaltipan, Catemaco, Chacaltianguis, Santiago Tuxtla, etc.

*So the travel was invaluable?*

Yes, but then I was still young, and didn't understand some things. So when I went again, I went to the Tuxtlas, which are very different, to Chacalapa, to Chinameca, to see how the fandangos varied. In Tuxtla they use a very rustic violin that they make.<sup>56</sup> It helps to actually go to those regions and see the traditions there, so that when we return here we can explain better...when I was younger I didn't realize that *son jarocho* traditions vary from region to region, and a lot of us that are older are not going to realize that, if we haven't gone.

*What other differences did you notice between regional styles of son jarocho?*

...for example "Cascabél" in Chacalapa is faster with a little different groove than it is in Tuxtla, where it is more mellow, more straight, with fewer *adornos*. Different musicians have different swing as well, and it depends who you talk to. My main teacher (Posadas) has been teaching me for over 20 years. I've also learned from Laura Reboloso, Rubi Oseguera, Andres (Flores)' daughter and her mom, and from Liche Oseguera... When I went the first time I went to Andres' house because I was going to play the harp in a

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<sup>56</sup> Joel Cruz Castellanos brought one of these violins to a workshop in Redwood City about a year ago. It is smaller and rougher in texture than a European violin, and its timbre is more like a baroque violin.

presentation at a fandango. That helped his kids to want to start to sing and play more.

*So the influence is two-way! I understand that you are also a professional counselor?*

Since my high school experience wasn't good, I went to Mexico after graduation. When I came back I was working doing cleaning and babysitting, realized I wanted more, and enrolled in community college for two years.

Some of my friends went to Stanford, and I had performed there...So I applied to transfer there and the University of San Francisco...and ended up going to USF. I graduated in two years with a Psychology degree. I wanted to get licensed and needed internship hours so I worked at the Edgewood facility. But in the course of my job, my arm was injured twice when I was accosted by patients and had to restrain them. That endangered my ability to play instruments, and I realized that if I wanted to continue with my passion in later years I would have to leave my counseling career. So I left counseling behind.

Ms. García took a pensive moment, then said:

I'm so grateful that I moved to Richmond and got to meet Maestro. He showed me a lot. To be able to go to Mexico with him and see all these different things--he's very inspirational.

*I understand he has been a major encouragement, especially to women?*

With maestro it's all about women. He doesn't like to do music that degrades women. He says "we don't play that kind of music, we don't sing lyrics like that"...he helped me to be comfortable as a musician in a culture where that role was historically male-dominated. Without him, I might not have been comfortable.

*And you traveled to perform at the Library of Congress recently? That must have been a big deal...*

Oh, yes. It was. Maestro was invited by Russell (Rodriguez) to the American Folklife Center's "Home Grown Series," and he brought me as part of the band. (Since this interview, Ms. Garcia has returned to Washington to perform with Posadas when he was awarded the NEA National Heritage Fellowship.)

*What is your favorite instrument to play?*

I think the *huapanguera* (bass Huastecan lute.)

On reflection, Ms. García's style of *zapateado* reminds me more of the style I witnessed in Coatepec, Veracruz, than many other Bay Area performers' styles do. Her travel seems to have provided both inspiration, and two-way artistic influence!

**V. A. 6. Claudia Arredondo. It's a borrowed tradition. It's my medicine.**

I first noticed Ms. Arredondo at fandangos for her proud, graceful style of *zapateado* and melodious voice. Later, I attended a fandango at her home where the famed Veracruzian *son jarocho* group Mono Blanco was participating. There, I met members of Arredondo's *jarocho* fusion band Feju, including the djembe player from Senegal mentioned in chapter 3. Ms. Arredondo also plays with Jessica Torres and others from the community in the women's traditional *jarocho* group Luna, Sol y Cielo. She has danced professionally with bands like Sistema Bomb (an electric-*jarocho* fusion effort) and artists visiting from Veracruz. We met over lunch, and she told me her story.

I am from Los Angeles, where I grew up, although my parents are Mexican. As a child I played a little music at school but this wasn't a special focus. When I went to college, I studied education and now I teach in the public schools in the South Bay. My daughter just graduated from UCSC.

*How did you come to be involved with son jarocho?*

After college, I was living with a number of friends in a big house in Morgan Hill. At one point, members of a prominent *jarocho* band from Veracruz came and stayed as houseguests while they were touring and teaching. They taught me how to play the *jarana* and dance the *zapateado* steps. I fell in love with the genre and after that, all I wanted to do was practice. I would shut myself in my room every day and practice for hours.

*I was wondering if you had any thoughts or advice for the jaranera/o community on how to address the stresses that arise in any community?*

It's important for people to remember that *son jarocho* is an ancient tradition that we have borrowed here in the Bay Area. It doesn't 'belong' to us so we must remember to respect it. It is a *borrowed* tradition. And then, it helps when people maintain perspective on what they are best situated to offer to the community. Some are best at organizing, others best at different aspects of interpretation, others at teaching, etc. We all have something different to offer, different strengths.

*Do you feel that fandango provides a scenario in which everyone can contribute their best? How do fandangos feel to you?*

Well, I teach in the public schools during the day and sometimes I am very tired on a fandango night, and I may not feel like going. But then I may get an inspiration from something, and get ready, and go. Once I am there, my energy comes back. It's my medicine. (Smiles broadly.)

*How do you feel about the women's role in the community?*

We can contribute artistically as well as organizing, once we have gained a level of proficiency. I have put together a couple of performing groups, and one of them, Luna Sol y Cielo, is woman-led.

I found a blog from this group online, and it speaks for itself:

*Luna, Sol y Cielo came about after a group of local women consisting of educators and performing artists came together to share their passion for Son Jarocho. The impetus of coming together was one of empowerment and forming bonds. The mission of Luna, Sol y Cielo is to share Son Jarocho with the community via performances and educational workshops.*

In the past few months, Ms. Arredondo has opted to take a pause from community events. She says she will return, and that she still practices every day, but that for now she needs to time to focus on other projects. In addition to teaching and performing groups, she is involved in creating a provocative line of artisan earrings.

#### **V. A. 7. Catherine John. You're gonna get addicted.**

Ms. John and I met at a 2012 Dia Pa' Son performance. Blond and just thirty-ish, she said she had just returned to the Bay Area and wanted to get involved in the

*son jarocho* scene here. Previously she had been in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where she had worked as founder and violinist of the *Orquesta Sinfónica del Fuego Nuevo*, a youth symphony. She had then gone for a Master's in Community Music at the University of Limerick, Ireland. I was intrigued, and she agreed to get together to discuss her interests in more depth. We met in a park in the South Bay.

*How did you become interested in son jarocho?*

I was working and living in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico and one of my friends invited me to come to a community fandango. When I agreed, she said “you’re gonna get addicted!” And it was wonderful, and provided kind of safe space when things were stressful, with this beautiful participative music.

*What was the main reason you went to Mexico?*

I had worked with youth orchestras in Europe, and the opportunity came up to work with a man I am so indebted to, and respect so much: Maestro Arturo Márquez. We established a youth orchestra and I wrote a grant that enabled us to take them to France to participate in the Eurochestries Festival in 2011. I also worked teaching English and music in a school during these years.

*Did you visit Veracruz while in Mexico?*

Yes, but only to play a gig, a *quinceañera*, which did not involve *son jarocho*!

*Now that you are back, what are you doing?*

I play with the *Mariachi Femenil Orgullo Mexicano* with Nydia González, and work with Enriching Lives through Music in San Rafael, an *El Sistema*-inspired program providing music classes to inner-city youth.



Fig. 20. Ms. John at work.

I worked for a while for the Mexican Heritage Corporation giving mariachi classes in the San Jose schools, and also play Irish music with a variety of groups.

*How do you ethnically identify?*

I would have to say that, although born WASP, not even Irish, I identify more with the Irish and Mexican cultures to whose music I am dedicated.

*How has your experience been modified by being a woman?*

In Mexico, as a single woman living alone, I often felt affronted by the societal norms of some people that seemed hostile to women. Yet when I encountered *son jarocho*, it was always a safe and welcoming space where I felt appreciated and encouraged by men and women alike. Even in the mariachi scene here in California, many women musicians have been put off by experiences involving machismo, and that's why we founded our own all-female group.

*You are referring to the Mariachi Femenil Orgullo Mexicano?*

Yes, we all encourage and support one another, and thanks to the novelty of being an all-female group, as well as our members' professional connections in the world of education and academia, we get to be featured at many special events in the Bay Area such as banquets honoring Latina women in education, etc. We received a grant to record an album with Women's Audio Mission in San Francisco—all those involved in this project are women. Being a woman in Mexican traditional music has taken me tons of great places!

Perhaps ironically, I've heard some *jaranera/os* comment that the *son jarocho* scene in the Bay Area was predominantly female for a long time, and that it's only in the last few years that more men have been getting involved and evening out the gender balance. I can see the appeal of this musical tradition to women. There's something that resonates for women about expressing your sentiments through song and dance, and we love to dress so simply yet elegantly with rebozos, etc.

*You have a number of projects that involve the interaction of traditional Irish music and traditional Mexican music. What are they, and what do you think links these traditions?*

In Mexico, I played with a Celtic-World fusion band called *A Campo Traviesa* and also organized traditional Irish music sessions in the community. In

Ireland, I was a founding member of *Mariachi San Patricio* (Saint Patrick.) All of these projects engendered very natural fusions between the two musical traditions. Since living in Ireland and Mexico, I've facilitated Celtic-Latin and Irish-Mexican music workshops in the Bay Area and in New Zealand. I'm currently recording my debut album of Irish-Mexican music. It should be coming out in spring or summer 2016.

For me, the most striking similarity between Irish and Mexican traditional music (especially *son jarocho*) is the space in which musical gatherings take place. Sessions or *fandangos* can go on all night. They are commonly held in a somewhat private space such as a kitchen or yard, but also in pubs and other more public spaces. All ages participate. People play standing or sitting in a circle (not facing an audience.) Participants come and go as they please. Dancing, singing, storytelling, and the recitation of poetry are most welcome. Food and drink abound. This musical circle feels welcoming and safe for me in both cultures, and I love to bring musicians from the two traditions together to experience this musical-cultural parallel in each other's company.

#### **V. A. 8. Maricarmen Arjona. A community in process.**

Ms. Arjona, originally from Mexico City, brings to Bay Area *jaranera/o* occasions not only her singing and *zapateado*, but also welcoming and encouraging newcomers, assisting with community cohesion, cooking special dishes, and organizing activist events. Her interview highlighted a range of issues that had not arisen before, such as processes of joining the community, the evolving character of the community, the special role played by women—which for the first time I did not have to broach, but which she addressed unprompted—and how *son jarocho* serves peoples who are displaced through migration or otherwise.

*How long have you been active with son jarocho?*

I have been actively engaged since 2010, so I am a recent member of this community. I got involved here in California. However I was interested in *son jarocho* for years before I was able to connect here. Since 2010 I've been constantly working and promoting this expression.



*Where did your prior interest arise?*

During the 1990's, I lived in Veracruz state for six months doing my internship in community sponsored radio. They used to broadcast the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* from Tlacotalpan. That's where I learned about the *encuentros*. However, being born and raised in Mexico it is not an expression that is foreign to me. I've heard *son jarocho*, as part of my cultural background, from other traditions--the more mainstream "Bamba" style and ballet folklórico style and all. There is a cultural radio in Mexico called Radio Educación that did a good job of covering *son jarocho*. They supported the *rescate* movement<sup>57</sup> of recovering *son*, so that was a venue for some of the music. When I was in Veracruz in 1991 hearing the broadcasts, I realized I wanted to be closer to the movement. But I never connected to anything there, so I had to find the community here.

*How did you get connected here?*

In 2010, at Zambaleta, the music school where I was taking dance classes in San Francisco, I saw a notice for a class with Patricio Hidalgo on *son jarocho*, *zapateo* and *jarana*. I thought "OK, this is it, this is how I'm going to connect." I had tried to connect with Los Cenzontles in San Pablo, but they said they only worked with kids. Finally I found this class. There were people in the class who had long been involved with helping to promote *son jarocho*. It's where I met Claudia Arrendondo and Maria de la Rosa.

*Was that when the community itself began?*

They had been in place for a while, but this is when I connected and began to learn a little.

*And then it was mostly Maestro Artemio, Maria, Claudia, Dolores?*

Yes, and Cassandra and Los Lupeños. I don't know if this comes up in your research, but it took a little bit of searching and mining, no? It's not, or it wasn't, that readily available. We are a community in process. There was a listserve, but I didn't know how to get onto it. It was like I needed to push to be in it! (Laughs.)

*Yes, there is an aspect that you have to go after yourself. But I wonder if it's almost like one of the things that makes the community, that everybody has to come to it through their own volition.*

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<sup>57</sup> Movement that developed in the 1980's and 90's in the Sotavento of Veracruz to resuscitate the *son jarocho* and fandango traditions, which had been falling into neglect.

I guess in a way you have to prove your interest...although I would have been under the impression that we wanted people to know about it; which we do. But when I first experienced it, if you were someone who had come through the circles of ballet folklórico, you would have acceptance...but if you were coming out of the blue and you were interested, there was some openness, but at the same time I wasn't necessarily having immediate access to everything. I had to search, to mine, to see what I needed to do to be included. And I think that has changed a bit if I compare 2010 to 2015.

*I must have started in 2012, and I think I've seen some of those changes too...One of the things I appreciate about your participation, is that you are helping newcomers to feel oriented and welcome.*

Thank you because that's where I want to put my effort. I really want to have a community and we are in process, but we don't have it finished yet. I've seen other groups in California or heard about how people in Seattle are doing. I think we still have work to do to become a more welcoming community.

*Is your main education in Communications?*

My Bachelor's is in Media and Social Studies, which is why I went to a community radio for my internship, XEYT Radio Teocelo, one of the oldest stations in the country sustaining society, close to Xalapa in Veracruz. It has many good programs that helped, back in the day where we didn't have internet. When I moved to California I got involved with health education and community health, and I earned a Master's in Public Health with a focus on health and social behavior from UC Berkeley.

*Now where do you work?*

(A major healthcare provider) at the national headquarters here in Oakland. Right now I work for the labor-management partnership as a learning consultant within Human Resources.

*Why son jarocho, among other music for social activism? Why has the genre become associated with social activism more than certain other musical traditions?*

That's a good question. I think it's due to the nature of *son jarocho* as really good for allowing any kind of improvisation or social gathering. It's easy to congregate people through *son jarocho*. Also, in the context of the U.S., *son jarocho* has a role in topics of cultural identity, immigration and social justice.

It's a way of expressing something without threatening others. Once when the issue of militarizing the border was getting hot, I invited some people to come and create awareness of what that that would involve, and I invited *soneros* to come because it's so easy to invite people to gather and it would help bring attention. Later I realized that there have been a lot of uses of *son jarocho* with activism, not only here but in Mexico as well. The flexibility of the music and lyrics for improvisation allows for it. It's the nature of the music.

*What specifically about the nature of the music? The participation, or what it expresses?*

One aspect is this music's history of being critical of the system. Not just in references to the president, but even when we hear how "Chuchumbe" was banned,<sup>58</sup> there is a history of using this music to spread things that somehow reflect the sentiment of people, what is going on in their daily lives. In some sense that involves the political as well... And these days, in the current context, it allows for an avenue to express and raise consciousness of concerns and for mobilizing the community.

*Do you feel that the lyrics of the traditional sones are sometimes coded or double-entendre and multi-level?*

Yes, and I've been learning more of that from the workshops and the references to revolutionary times.

*What do you personally like about son jarocho?*

I certainly like the beat, the rhythm, the liveliness. The characteristic, or even the stereotype, is it's a very happy music, which it is. But I've also gotten to learn now about some of the *sones* that are more mellow, the *sones de madrugada*, these other faces of *son jarocho*... I feel so compelled by the rhythm... it moves me a lot. It gets me close-in.

I like it over other types of Mexican folk expressions, because I like the participatory aspect, the collectiveness that it creates, the improvisation that it embraces. I like the fact that if you have something to contribute, you can bring it into the mix. And as long as you understand some of the basic rules of engagement with the dancing, with the music, with the improvisation of the spoken word while singing, you can be part of it.

It's interesting because it seems simpler than what it is. It *seems* easier (laughs.) And that is a positive, because it invites you, inspires you to be

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<sup>58</sup> By the Inquisition in 1766.

involved; and then you realize that it is WAY more complicated, complex, elaborate.<sup>59</sup>

*What would you like to see written about what our community does?*

I would like to see a recap of how it has developed in this area. What is the story of *son jarocho* in the Bay Area? What I see as the issues, is that people have their territories, and there is this thing about who gets the credit for what... It's important to have these champions.

But things happen because there are other people supporting it as well, others are involved, although maybe not being as committed or not having this as a living... I would like to ... acknowledge the champions and also be able to see the other people involved ... a clearer picture of who's been involved, and not just this person here or this person there. There are many people involved and we or I don't know about it. Who are they? Who are the different players, the different efforts? Who has it been since the 1970's? I know there are many aspects of the recovery or restoration project... I know there have already been a couple of decades of work here on *son jarocho*, and we hear names, but I am sure there are more people involved. It will be interesting to see more of a recap of how it has been evolving here in the Bay Area.

*Yes, if it were only professionals, it wouldn't really be a community. Some of my professors think it is interesting to look at dynamics between community and professionalism, what do you think?*

Well, I don't really know much detail in order to provide that information. But what I certainly think is that there is this kind of status that people have either because they have training in the music or because they are professional. When I started in the community there was this thing about "come and see us perform," but not really getting too involved with helping building the community...

Some of the people who do the community-building have usually been girls... especially in the past, in the work of creating the spaces to do the fandango and to hold the workshops ...

*Yes, the idea that so much of the community organization is by women has struck me too. Although now a few men are stepping up.*

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<sup>59</sup> Cesar Castro Jarochelo, native of Veracruz and leader of the Southern California band Cambalache that has played at the Library of Congress, likened the genre to an ocean that looks homogenous on the surface, but just under the surface is a riot of variety (personal communication).

Yes, now there is a shift in that. I am seeing more of the men doing it but they are the new people... who are connected with ... other networks in Mexico or in other parts of the country. So they belong to the scene but they are kind of new in this area... now more people are interested in building community. And they are participating with these different champions who are creating and maintaining the spaces: Cassandra with Domingo de Son, and Maria with the workshops and now Lolís (Dolores García) with her classes, these champions that work in a related field with the arts or with education. And then you have the others that like it very much and are hanging out and helping build the community.

And I think it is specific of the Bay Area. *Son jarocho* is almost a fashion now, in certain circles, environments, scenes. It's become more popular, you see younger people getting involved, a passion around it and the music, the festivals, the shoes. It's a culture that is spreading. We are getting people that have seen this in other places that are following the trend...I may be part of that, even, I don't know because I'm a recent one. It's different from people who have been doing this for ten, fifteen, twenty years.

*One of your parents is from Spain? Did you spend much time in Spain? Do you feel that son jarocho is very Spanish?*

I do see connections. My dad is from Southern Spain, from Andalusia, and I lived a couple of years in Cordoba in 2007. My dad and his family were refugees from the Spanish Civil War. So when they arrived to Mexico they arrived to the port of Veracruz, and they were so well welcomed and received, after having such a hard time and no one wanting them anywhere for so long. So there is a huge appreciation not only for Mexico, but for Veracruz. There is a special connection, an emotional connection, for me, because my family, aunts and uncles were so well received. It was just a blessing.

And it was somehow familiar to what they had seen...I grew up hearing my dad's version of "El Coco" as he remembered and could play it. When I see styles like that of Tlacotalpan, they remind me of flamenco *tablaos*, because it's a faster style and the *zapateado* is faster. These things are links with the Spanish roots.

*When you did spend the time in Cordoba, did you attend the flamenco tablaos?*

Yes, because that's what people do! Just to clarify, it's only my dad who immigrated to Mexico. My mom is from Northern Mexico and she migrated internally to Mexico City.

*That is an interesting term: internal migration.*

I have been able to understand migration to the U.S. because my family did the internal migration. Many may go first to the bigger cities before they come here. Leaving the place of your origin, where your roots are, although you can develop other roots later, you have to leave your reputation, your community, what you do of value. Moving, even just to Mexico City, to the big city, you have to compete and to build again that space that you had before, your community, your reputation, your social capital. So depending on your needs, you have to do it all over again. What I see with *son jarocho* is that it allows you to easily belong to a community if the community allows for that.

*Now that you mention it, I relate to that. My current family made internal migrations in the U.S. several times. Due to the circumstances leading up to SB 1070 we felt we owed it to our children to move out of Arizona. Then we had to re-create social capital here.*

That's why I really want to see how we can build the community. Because I know there are these great communities of *son jarocho*, and I have been fortunate to travel to some in Mexico. But when I think of *son jarocho* I think of our community here. I don't necessarily think of the very beautiful, graceful skillful dancers and performers. I think of us, our getting together for *Domingo de Son's* monthly practice, or getting together for protests, or getting together for a monthly fandango in Santa Clara, that's what I think of. That's what *son jarocho's* bringing me and I think it's bringing everyone. Of course it's great to have people sharing their knowledge and traditions. But when I think about my community in the Bay Area, it's beautiful and I think, "OH WOW." That's what we are building, that's what we have, and this is a music that allows for all this diversity, so we actually, many of us, relate to this expression. Right? Let's see what we can do, because it requires a lot of work. Building communities requires a lot of work. (Laughs.)

### **V. A. 9. Daniel Sheehy. A peak experience.**

Daniel Sheehy finished his UCLA ethnomusicology dissertation on *son jarocho* in 1979. A compendium of information about the genre, it stands today as a first recourse for scholars who wish to delve into the topic. Strikingly, Sheehy observed in his dissertation that *son jarocho* seemed to be in decline. Of course, he finished writing just prior to the start of the *rescate* (rescue, revival) movement. Nevertheless, even then, he described fandango as “a peak experience.”

More recently, Sheehy has held important positions at the Smithsonian Institution, including directorship of Folkways Recordings. As of the interview, he was the director of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage there. In these positions he has brought many artists’ work in both *jarocho* and *huasteco son*, (among other genres), to the fore, including that of Artemio Posadas. He generously offered me an hour to answer questions. Key moments of our conversation follow:

*How did you come to be interested in son jarocho?*

I was studying at UCLA, and participating in a Ghanaian drumming and dance group there. I had also been playing in rhythm and blues bands in Compton for some time before that. Anyway, a friend introduced me to the sound and I noticed a strong connection with the African and r&b rhythms and feel.

*Do you feel that women’s participation in the genre has increased since you wrote your dissertation?*

Not necessarily; women have always been involved with son jarocho.<sup>60</sup>

*Do you believe that son jarocho has historically been a music of resistance?*

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<sup>60</sup> While this would be true of dance, female instrumentalists emerged more in the past few decades.

Yes. For example, in the nineteenth century someone was shot in the streets for performing “Los Enanos.”

This *son* is said to refer to the French occupation of the port of Veracruz during the “Pastry Wars.” The title means “The Dwarves,” perhaps for Napoleon’s stature.

Sheehy took to the stage himself in the Bay Area recently, performing along with Maestro Posadas at a festival honoring his NEA fellowship.

#### **V. A. 10. Francisco González. It is always this way.**

One of the most influential people in my decision to study *son jarocho* was Francisco Gonzalez. A classical music student at Pomona College at the time I was there, he simultaneously studied traditional Mexican music in conjunction with friends that began the well-known group Los Lobos. González introduced me to the *Huastecan* and *jarocho son* genres, stating prophetically, “you have *got* to hear this music!” He was particularly moved by the cross-rhythms and polyrhythms he heard and his enthusiasm was contagious. In the course of the present project I contacted him in Kansas, where his wife, Chicana feminist Yolanda Broyles, was starting an American Studies Department at the State University. I was seeking his wisdom on a variety of issues. Our conversation consisted of correspondence and phone calls, not a formal interview. Still, a few interchanges are important to include here.

*You did not continue with Los Lobos very long, and after you left, I missed them playing the traditional music.*

They wanted to go in one direction (the band became more known for rock) and I wanted to focus on Mexican genres. These really were two different projects. But it was funny, once, several years later, a person was visiting my



studio and said “wow, there was also a member of Los Lobos named Francisco González. Didn’t he die?”

*You were the Musical Director for Luis Valdez’ Teatro Campesino for several years. And you and your wife have donated your archive to Texas A&M.*

Yes, I was with the *Teatro* in the early 1980’s. We were touring Europe and that is where I met Yolie (Yolanda Broyles), in Germany.

*I remember when we were college students, you were just starting to play the harp. Now you are an acknowledged virtuoso, as you can hear on your CD “The Gift.”*

I was a bass player, and learning the harp would be like learning to fly. But now, when I go to Veracruz and play with the musicians there, people who don’t know me think I am from there. I am working on a book about Mario Barradas, the best harp player of Mexico of the twentieth century.

*I understand you have collaborated with Russell Rodríguez here on some projects?*

Yes, we laid down the soundtrack for PBS’ special “The Storm that Swept Mexico” about the Mexican Revolution and Emilio Zapata.

*You also collaborated with the Rondstadt brothers<sup>61</sup> and served as mentor to jaranero George Sanchez-Tello when you were living in Tucson.*

Yes, Michael Rondstadt and I traveled to Alaska for some gigs. And I give *jarocho talleres* (workshops) wherever I go; singing, *jarana* playing, and so on. George came to my studio in Tucson. We lived right across from Yolie’s mother (who is Yaqui—there is a diasporic Yaqui community in Tucson.)

*I am concerned about how a musical community resolves conflicts between ethics of professionalism and functioning as community; what happens when members come into competition with each other. What is your advice?*

I have been doing this for a long time. I’ve been playing *son jarocho* since before the *rescate* movement<sup>62</sup> began, before Mono Blanco... And this happens. I was there during rifts among (several prominent Veracruz *jarocho* artists...) And what I see is those who really care about the music stay with the community. Others come and go. It is always this way.

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<sup>61</sup> Linda Rondstadt’s brother and nephews, folk singers and activists, formed “Rondstadt Generations.”

<sup>62</sup> *Rescate* (rescue) is a nickname for the movement among residents of southern Veracruz who have dedicated themselves to preserving and reviving the *jarocho* repertoire and fandango traditions. It came together in the late 1980’s and 1990’s.

From there, González shared his fatherly pride that one of his sons had recently received his Master's degree in Early Music.

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These interviews covered many topics, but four in particular emerged that are pursued in chapter 6: Inclusivity as a value appeared in the Beltráns', Posadas', and Arjona's conversations. Posadas, Arjona, de la Rosa, García and John addressed women and their roles. Activism is a special interest of Arjona; while others participate, a few keep their politics dissimulated within the spaces of the practices. Transcendence characterizes the energy and commitment levels of those who spoke. The next section attempts to honor the artistry, efforts and vibrance of the broader community.

#### **V. B. Key Players.**

This section's title is both a pun on music, and seriously accurate. Brief sketches of some sixty *jaranera/os* evoke the energy and diversity that the community comprises. However, every participant's contribution, whether holding space at fandangos or leading *sones*, adds to the community and its magic. Thus, while it is only possible to introduce some (among other reasons because people come and go), everyone who participates in the Bay Area *jaranera/o* scene is key.

The sketches are skewed toward attendees at South Bay Area events, where this research was housed, although some represent people from Marin County and Richmond (north of Berkeley); participants hail from as far away as Sacramento. The average age of the group sketched is thirty-eight, with a fairly normal distribution

from infancy to eighty. Twenty-two percent are not Latina/o. Eleven percent are from countries other than the U.S. or Mexico (sixty percent are from the U.S.) As do the interviews, the sketches reveal high energy, inclusivity, female participation and familiarity with activism. Artistic pursuits extend beyond *son jarocho* for many. Educational levels are fairly high, although this is not an expressed value. Pseudonyms are used to protect the privacy of those who are not public figures, but the first sketches are of the interviewees above, who have given permission to use their names.

Artemio Posadas has taught almost everyone in the Bay Area community in some way. A native of San Luis Potosí state in Mexico, he has deeply studied indigenous and mestizo musical traditions, sharing them in the Bay Area for over thirty-five years. He is a masterful *zapateadist*, *jaranero*, *requinto* player, violinist, singer, and *versador*. He is also a skillful harpist, and plays *mariachero vihuelas* and *huastecan* lutes as well as *jarocho* ones. He has performed multiple times in Washington D.C. at the Library of Congress and recorded for the Smithsonian. His values have shaped the scene: tradition, respect, humility. He runs marathons.

Jorge and Lourdes Beltrán are frequent hosts and vibrant artists at community events. Sra. Beltrán danced folklórico in high school, while Sr. is from Coatepec, Veracruz, where he played American football before playing in a heavy metal band, dancing Aztec traditions and taking up *son jarocho* in the U.S. With their school-aged son, they sing, play multiple Mexican lutes and percussion instruments, and dance

*zapateado*. Jorge improvises *son* verses, as well. Both studied *son jarocho* with Maestro Posadas.

María de la Rosa has a Master's degree in Education from Stanford. That is where she began dancing folklórico some decades back. She has had intensive studies with Maestro Posadas and has worked with him at the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts. She has established *son* workshops and fandangos at La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley, and performs widely for both charitable and paid occasions. Among the grants she has received are several for transnational projects involving Veracruzian *son jarocho* artists and the composition of new *sones*. She is a singer, lyricist, dancer and *jarana* player. She also practices Puerto Rican *bomba*.

Cassandra Millspaugh teaches Spanish at the University of San Francisco, and travels widely, having spent significant time in Mexico, Africa and Spain. Irish and Jewish by birth, she practices ritual dance traditions from Africa and the U.S., as well as Buddhist meditation. About a decade ago, she came upon *son jarocho*, and began its serious study. She hosts a free monthly workshop in San Francisco, and performs widely at both charity and paid engagements around the Bay Area. Her specialties are vocals, *jarana*, versifying, *zapatedo* and *requinto*.

Dolores García's *son* practice began before high school, when she became a student of Maestro Posadas at the East Bay Center in Richmond. Now with her degree in counseling, she teaches at the East Bay Center, and has traveled with Posadas to play and record at the library of Congress in Washington D.C. She performs widely, and offers classes in *zapateado*. Her expertise includes singing,

dancing and playing a multitude of instruments in a variety of regional genres of Mexico, in addition to *son jarocho*.

Claudia Arredondo hails from Los Angeles. She fell in love with *son jarocho* when, as a young college graduate, she was living in a shared house in Morgan Hill, and a renowned Veracruz *jarocho* band came for an extended stay while on tour. They taught her to sing, play and dance *son jarocho* and she has been practicing and performing ever since, attending fandangos and heading up bands such as *Luna, Sol y Cielo* and *Feju*, even as she teaches in the San Jose Unified School District.

Maricarmen Arjona first came to love *son jarocho* when, as an undergraduate Communications student, she interned at a Veracruz radio station. It was not until after she earned her Master's degree and was working in Oakland that she found a community with which to participate more deeply in the genre. With her communications background, she was a natural to become a community organizer, identifying charitable and activist performance opportunities for the community and encouraging newcomers to acclimate, even while maintaining a professional "day job" in human resources/communications for a large, well-known healthcare organization.

Catherine John lived and co-founded a youth orchestra in Cuernavaca, Morelos; she wrote a Mexican government grant to take the orchestra to a festival in France. After earning her Bachelors degree at Pomona College, she received a Master's in Community Music in Limerick, Ireland. Yes, she also plays Irish folk music. She is a violinist, vocalist and *jaranera*. She enjoys interactions between the

Irish and Mexican traditions, attributing them to similar roots as participative expressions of common people. Ms. John works in a women's mariachi group in the North Bay, as well as in programs that bring music to schoolchildren.

"Vicky" is Artemio Posadas' wife. While they had known each other as young people at university, the pair only became a couple a few years ago. She does not participate in the Bay Area *jaranera/o* community as a dancer, singer or instrumentalist (although she is a fine dancer.) However, her artistic and community contributions are indispensable: she photographs community occasions, documenting up to several per week; she cooks gourmet Mexican dishes; and her constant encouragement is part of what makes the community function.

"Flora" was instrumental in building community practice of *son jarocho* in the South Bay. Once an Aztec dancer, she and her husband "Enrique" met Maestro Posadas and began to learn the traditions he taught, recruiting friends such as the Beltráns to learn as well. They regularly attend fandangos and have traveled to Mexico to perform with Maestro.

"Sachiko" is from Japan, where she studied at the University of Tokyo. A classical pianist, she works as a translator and performs folklórico and other genres with "Roberto," who has a degree in acoustical engineering. Sachiko took up the Veracruzian harp and *jarana*, and Roberto, who is a multi-instrumentalist, reports that she has vastly improved his sense of pitch and tuning.

"Julio" is from central Mexico, and goes back many years with Maestro Posadas. He is a radio disc jockey in the Bay Area, plays guitar and dances, and has

made his own *jarana* at a studio in Tlacotalpan, Veracruz. His low-key welcoming immensely helped my family and me to assimilate into the community.

Tomás Herrera Montoya is a master *requinto* player with a blues-rock background who often plays with Dr. Loco and His Rockin' Jalapeño Band, and attends *jaranero* gatherings. Dr. Loco, aka Dr. Jose Cuellar, is a professor of Chicano Studies at San Jose State University and leader of the aforesaid band, in which he plays saxophone. As a relatively public figure with a rock background, he supports local *jaranera/os* to the extent that he has served as master of ceremonies for the annual San Francisco Encuentro, and attends workshops and events. He has called the Bay Area community “*son jarocho* in diaspora.”

“Humberto,” who comes to Oakland from Guadalajara and studied cinematography at university, was relative newcomer to *son jarocho* only a couple of years ago. Yet, with his background in other genres of Mexican music, he has become a prominent singer, player and *zapateadist*. He has organized a regular fandango in the East Bay. His enthusiastic encouragement and promotional verve help others to acculturate. Also from Guadalajara is “Rodrigo.” With his degree in graphic design, his pirate sense of style and string playing add drama to community events. He and Humberto spearheaded a project to build *tarimas* for the community.

Among millennial community members, “Fernando” is a *jaranero* and luthier from deep *jarocho* country, as is “Geronimo,” a gifted dancer. Both bring authenticity of style. They and “Angel,” a visual artist from South America, are some of those living in the East Bay who will carry the tradition and the community into the future.

Similarly, “Pedro” is the son of “Antonio.” Both are longstanding community members and accomplished practitioners. Pedro, who was mentored by Maestro Posadas, plays violin in *huasteco grupos*, *requinto* in *jarocho* ones, guitarrón in *mariachero*, and bass in a *norteno*. His mother attends events, too. Antonio is a dedicated distance runner like Artemio and Jorge and a skilled *zapateadist*, who works at a well-known local high tech firm.

“Iman” and Nydia Algazzali González hail from the North Bay. The former is originally from East-Central Mexico, and sings, dances and plays at many events. The latter is a professional mariachi and teacher of Mexican music, with an anthropology degree from UC Berkeley, allied with the Youth in Arts organization and founding member of the women’s group *Mariachi Femenil Orgullo Mexicano*. A mother of school-aged children, she is currently the recipient of a grant from a women’s arts support organization to make a CD, webcast and performances.

Russell Rodríguez has contributed to the community since the early days of Maestro Posadas’ teaching. He began to practice Mexican music traditions as a student at Stanford, performing with Posadas and Los Lupeños, and becoming a professional mariachi. Having earned a Ph.D. in Anthropology from UCSC, he has documented aspects of his career in his own publications. Rodríguez continues to perform and record professionally, while teaching and managing programs for the Association of California Traditional Arts.

Other community members who hail back to Posadas’ early days include dance Maestro Rudy Figueroa. Originally from California’s Central Valley, Maestro



Rudy has performed and taught for Los Lupeños and for Posadas' *El Mosquito* project. He has been dancing various regional Mexican styles since 1971. Once an instructor for the University of San Diego's Summer Program in Guadalajara, he has also directed the children's group Niños de Aztlán. His other experiences include performing in the Aztec group Xochipilli, and serving as panelist for the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival auditions. He is a guest performer for Los Cenzontles, a north bay folklórico organization with strong ties to the Bay Area *jaranero* community, and a teacher of the Japanese dance genre, *natori*. Among other projects he worked in the Hanayagi dance school and as instructor for *Hilos de Plata*, a senior citizen dance group. Maestro Rudí is a frequent participant in fandangos, where he makes the most difficult steps seem easier for his dance partners.

“Roxanne,” a philanthropist with Japanese ancestry, also dances both traditions with Rudy, and has been involved for as long as he, even before the inception of the Bay Area *jaranera/o* community. She works within the public education system.

Among next-generation *jaraneras*, “Xochita” and “Teresa,” sisters from San Jose, as well as their mother, have hosted community events, offer special talents in *zapateado* and singing, and perform with Rodrigo. “Yolanda” and “Lisa” enliven the community from the North-east Bay. “Imelda” has recently finished her Bachelors degree in dance, and has already choreographed several productions in the Bay Area. “Victoria” is a professional teacher of several dance genres, notably tap and *zapateo*, in San Francisco. “Cristina” is a virtuoso, yet non-Latina, violinist who has been

drawn into *son jarocho* by the beauty of the music and the community and often professionally performs with Latin musical groups, while teaching music in schools.

Others who light up any fandango they attend include “Yesenia,” a professional folklórico dancer who attended Stanford and co-founded a women’s *son jarocho* performing group. “Gregorio” attended lots of fandangos and workshops with his tiny dog, but has not been around as much since he left for Mexico on a grant to document endangered languages and later focused on his journalism career. “Lorenzo” is a professional bass player in a variety of styles with a UC Berkeley degree, who has also been spending time in Mexico to steep in the culture. His drummer friend “Gonzalo” is involved in the Voodoo community in Oakland, and was intrigued when he heard some of the same rhythms in *son jarocho*.

Camilo Landau is from a family of music producers; he spearheads fusion *jarocho* projects and facilitates the annual “Encuentro” of *Jaranera/os* in San Francisco, where curator and activist “Jaime,” Jaime’s wife from Asia, and their child participate. Stuvesant Bearnas-Esteva wrote his 2011 sociology Ph.D. dissertation about *son jarocho* at UCSC; he currently runs a craft beer establishment in Santa Cruz, with his *jaranera* wife “Estella.”

“Victor” is a librarian at Stanford University. He plays, among other instruments, a *marimbola* that he hand-made. The *marimbola* is said to have originated in Cuba, but is often played with *son jarocho*, due to the Caribbean influence shared by Cuba and Veracruz. The instrument is a lamellophone, similar to the African *mbira* or *kalimba*, only larger. It is useful for providing a bass line. When

Victor and his wife “Zoe” attend fandangos, the resonant undercurrent of the *marimbola* is a welcome sound.

“Freida” became involved in María de la Rosa’s Oakland workshops a few years ago. Of Brazilian heritage, she has a school-aged son whose father has Mexican roots. A Mills College graduate, she has worked as a researcher in community health and as a program manager. Her passion for *son jarocho* led her to make a substantial pilgrimage to Veracruz. Recently, she wrote grants that brought several master teaching artists from Veracruz for a summer residency in the Bay Area. “Maritza” is an African-American folkloric dancer in a variety of traditions, who performs professionally with companies such as the Duniya Dance and Drum Company. She has been a vibrant dancer at fandangos in the Bay Area and beyond.

“Lynn” and “Diego” are mother and son. She is from the Midwest where she met her husband dancing ballroom at a college event. She began her practice of *son jarocho* in conjunction with the folklórico to which he introduced her, eventually learning to play harp as well. Diego grew to be an accomplished *requinto* player who has performed with some world-class artists from Mexico. He also played violin in his university orchestra, while obtaining a degree in computer science. Along with Bearn Esteva, Estella and Russell Rodríguez, he forms part of the Santa Cruz node of the Bay Area community.

Dear friends of the Beltráns who attend community events include “Timoteo,” a gentleman from Jalisco, and his grown-up daughter; “Anna” and her three school-age sons; and a mother and school-aged young lady who is a *zapateado* and *jarana*

student of Jorge. Neighbors, including kids, often check in. More children attend events with their parents, including one for whom a cafe in Oakland was named. The café's owner has hosted numerous community events, from workshops to La Rama festivities.

“Donna” and “Lucila” hail from San Francisco. The former has been a community activist for decades and once danced the recuperated Aztec style; she says she continues with *son jarocho zapateado* as a personal practice for stamina; she also writes *décimas*. The latter brings her elegant folklórico dance background to fruition in workshops and concerts.

Of course the foregoing descriptions risk being both oversimplified and bewildering, while they leave out many community members, due to scope limitations. However, the objective is neither completeness nor clarity; rather it is to provide a sense of the many origins and talents comprising the Bay Area *jaranera/o* community. Multiple genders and races participate. Most speak Spanish, but only a fraction is originally from Mexico. Just over half of participants are under forty, the rest are over. Approximately half are women.

A few are primarily professional musicians; most have jobs in education, businesses, services, the professions, or non-profit. Virtually everyone is either college-educated or an independent scholar, but academic erudition is less valued than shared experience. Still, eight percent are career academics. This is not unique to the Bay Area, perhaps partially because academia itself is a site where social issues and the arts may be ardently explored.

Many in the Bay Area participate in non-*jarocho* artistic genres or customs: Irish folk music, vodou, rumba, bomba, rock, folk, lindy hop, gospel, West African, Huastecan, Aztec, Tenek, mariachi, mariachero, classical, ballroom, tap, modern dance, jazz, yoga chant, classical Japanese dance—and flower arranging, cinematography, sewing, painting, jewelry making, and instrument-making. This speaks to a larger creative impulse, perhaps related to high energy levels and/or to enjoyment of traditional, non-capitalist or participative modalities. In the case of practices such as the Aztec, Tenek, bomba, and vodou, affinity for transcendence-evoking embodied genres may obtain. This recalls Maestro Posadas' esteem of *son* as noble and the premium he places on attending and holding fandangos—values he has shared with the majority of participants that have at some point learned from him. It also puts into perspective the intense level of service that the Beltráns and so many others have afforded the community.

Community dynamics that emerged during the interviews, surrounding ethics of inclusivity, womens' contributions, activism, and transcendence, are explored in the next chapter.

## **Chapter VI. Ethics of transcendence on the ground**

Chapter 5's interviews hint at several ethical dynamics that inform *son jarocho*'s efficacy in the Bay Area today: inclusivity, women, and activism, all three grounded in dialogues involving bases in tradition and modernity. A characteristic shared by most of the interviewees is a depth of dedication that implies near-transcendent forces and outcomes. Exploration of these matters follows below. Not all of the comments quoted in this chapter are attributed, as their use here is not about who said them, but rather what was said, and nearly all were cited in chapter 5.

### **VI. A. Inclusivity: a matter of performativity**

Conversations among Bay Area *jaranera/os* reference an inclusivity that transcends ethnicity, creed and gender. "Community is a group of people from different backgrounds and positions who come together to enjoy the same things" (L. Beltrán, above). Young and old alike "step up to the plate," to borrow Ms. García's words, so as to fulfill community needs of organization, welcoming, nourishment, and activism, as well as artistic expression.

Nevertheless, occasional exceptions arise: unintentional lack of access for neophytes, lack of centrality for non-Spanish speakers, or lack of recognition for non-professionals. Bears Esteva and Sanchez-Tello discuss implicit sharing of political and social values within *jaranera/o* communities in their 2011 works. In the Bay Area, this is perhaps most visible in activist events such as protests. However, not everyone attends these events; although most of those absent likely support the same causes, a few might not.

Moreover, the community is “in process,” as Ms. Arjona notes in her interview, ever re-defining itself according to who participates. This, in turn, is a function of who hears about community events. Communication networks have at times been patchy, relying on word-of-mouth or randomly placed posters to publicize workshops and fandangos. Some who would have liked to participate had to wait, to “dig and mine,” as Ms. Arjona says, to uncover information about where to be and when.

Yet, some degree of digging and mining may help others to come to feel like members of a community. Just as Turner suggested that *communitas* follows periods of uncertain status and identity de- and re-construction, Robin Sylvan, in *Trance Formation*, relates that learning the locations of rave culture events may follow maneuvering intentional sequences of obstacles, which adds to anticipation and facilitates shedding of workaday identities, thus, possibly, increasing affective euphoria. It also has helped to protect the sanctity of the rave space from the gaze or transgressions of those who did not mean well by it.

Some obstacles to inclusivity are inevitable and common to many communities. When attendees at an occasion primarily speak Spanish, those who do not will not be able to participate in many conversations.<sup>63</sup> When a person attends for the first time, s/he will know fewer people than will returnees, and will need to pay extra attention to discern what behaviors are appropriate. When one attends and looks different from other attendees, s/he may, at least initially, feel awkward.

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<sup>63</sup> See later in this section, and in the section on “transcendence” for interpretations of language differences not as a barrier, but as an irrelevancy, when the lingua franca is music.

Obstacles, however, may have benefits beyond the *communitas* that arises when they are overcome. For example, U.S. neighborhoods will generally tolerate occasions so long as they do not bother the neighbors. As a result, it is important for the survival of neighborhood-based community occasions that those who attend are somewhat self-vetted as circumspect, with regard for matters like noise ordinances. The process of digging and mining assists with this vetting: only those with sincere interest are likely to expend the efforts associated with attendance.

When my family first arrived at a Bay Area fandango, we were welcomed after merely explaining that we had found out about the occasion from a mutual acquaintance. My white stranger's face might have raised a red flag, given that elements of white U.S. society persist in anti-immigrant and racist tendencies. Moreover, the event was in a private home. Even in a public space, if we had come to party loudly, lewdly or lawlessly, this could have caused problems with the neighbors that would have negatively impacted a cherished tradition.

#### **VI. A. 1. Forging and performing identities**

Another benefit of self-vetting through digging and mining is that the community is able to forge an identity separate from the general public, and, in turn, to offer greater utility for its members to forge their own identities.

Many Latina/os and others are familiar with identity paradoxes. Sonia Saldivar-Hull, in *Feminism at the Border: from Gender Politics to Geo-Politics*, consults W.E.B. Du Bois' theory of double consciousness, which originally described



how African-Americans may sense they are always looking at themselves through the eyes of others. Saldivar applies the phenomenon:

In the Chicana/o context, the doubleness comes from a subject position between Mexican and American, between English and Spanish, between Mexico and the United States; not only one, never the other, yet both (9).

*Son jarocho* in the fandango, at political events, and at paid gigs, provides sites where double consciousness as experienced by some Latina/os, and others whose ethnicities harbor complexities, can be transcended by performing ethnicity. Theorist Judith Butler proposed that this kind of performativity enabled social reality and individual identity to be creations based on individuals' speech, their actions, and their symbolic associations, rather than externally-determined absolutes.

Thus, at one venue, a Senegalese man offers *son* verses and djembe percussion, teasing out and performing the African foundations of the genre. Elsewhere, an Asian violinist, trained classically, improvises with abandon to a *jarocho* tune next to her white cellist husband, in a Chicana/o band. Still again, even white women, on occasion, may "leave their souls on the *tarima*," a phrase from Veracruz meaning to have "a cathartic and spiritual experience while dancing," and come to identify, at least culturally, as partially Mexican (Martha González, "Sonic" 59).

The notion of adopting an ethnicity other than the one inherited at birth has been criticized, with good reason, as problematic on a number of levels. I do not suggest that those who perform reformulated ethnic identities are a majority in the Bay *jaranera/o* community, nor that we are overly deluded as to the limits of such

performativity. Rather, those who already confront paradoxes in their ethnic situations, and/or experience double consciousness, may find that performing ethnicity within the *jaranera/o* context provides a means to transcend and resolve the difficulties entailed with ethnic paradoxes, even if temporarily.

For example, the master's thesis of Sanchez-Tello describes his process of coming to terms with paradoxes of ethnic identity through participation in the Los Angeles *son jarocho* community. The author grew up in Arcadia, an affluent suburb of Los Angeles. His father is from New Mexico, his mother from Guatemala. While his skin is brown, he did not speak Spanish as a child, and only became aware that his ethnicity could yield social implications when he reached high school. Here are excerpts from his thesis:

I guess it's no surprise I didn't know how to explain, much less understand, myself or my experience...we couldn't talk about race in real terms...

...Most of us – the Latino students – thought we were white, even though a glance in the mirror would reveal otherwise. So we acted like we thought we were...

In high school, people acted surprised that I didn't speak Spanish. I got poor grades in my Spanish classes (due to) mixed messages I'd received my whole life about Spanish...So I withdrew and disengaged in the classroom. I was embarrassed and angry...but I didn't know how to talk about these feelings.

Then there was Timmy.

Timmy was my best friend in first and second grade. His father was a doctor. The family was wealthy. They were white. Timmy used to invite me to his home to play...the only people that looked physically like me were the gardeners that maintained the massive property...I never understood why they smiled at me. Then in third grade Timmy stopped hanging out with me...my mom's explanation never went beyond: 'they think they're better than us'...

At a high school party...a group of Armenians showed up. It was rumored they were gang members, but I have doubts. The white family who owned the

home where the party was...contacted their neighbors, Timmy's family. Timmy assembled with his father and older brothers outside to do something about the Armenians. Armed with rifles and baseball bats, the family stood alongside one another. Witnesses later claim the clan stood in a V-formation, as if going into battle. The father made a simple statement: "All foreigners must leave."

Armenians mistake me for Armenian. I wasn't about to let Timmy and his family do the same...I had finally learned the lesson no one said aloud: I was Latino in Arcadia. I was not white. I left the party right away. I've never discussed the incident with my family. My girlfriend asks why I didn't call the police that night. It never occurred to me that the police would do anything...

I quit trying to fit in. I stopped...going to high school parties where I was only going to stand, ignored, in the corner...My skin, my name, my culture, regardless of my sense of identity, all kept me from being fully integrated...Police have pulled me over two blocks from my parent's house and asked what I was doing 'here.' During the summer of 2011, when my girlfriend, brother, and I went into a used bookstore in Arcadia, looking for a text for a graduate class, the store clerk became visibly nervous and alert...

So when I discovered Son Jarocho...becoming jaranero was meant to be an explicit statement of my identity as a Latino in the United States. It was about me openly embracing my roots and it was about me openly rejecting an implied suburban path of assimilation that surrounded me in Arcadia (9-12).

Sanchez-Tello reconciles and performs his ethnic identity through *son jarocho*.

Previously a punk rocker, he was fortunate to meet Francisco González (interviewed in chapter 5) who served as his maestro in Tucson for a time. His thesis describes his journey through being neither white nor Mexican, not speaking Spanish yet Latino (referred to colloquially with various intentions as *pochó*), to finding an accepting community with which to ethnically identify and take positive action about social issues.

My own suburban Southern California upbringing in ways represented the opposite side of the author's story. I offer this humiliating self-disclosure in order to

be forthright about aspects of my own identity processes within *son jarocho*, which might shed some perspective for conceptualizing the situations of others with similar backgrounds. Growing up a generation earlier than Sanchez-Tello in a suburb west of the San Fernando Valley, my mother was an activist for racial equality, and my parties, friends and dates spanned a variety of ethnicities. Still, white privilege and ignorance pervaded the atmosphere. This anecdote, which haunts me, illustrates:

As a sixth grader, my family had just internally migrated from the Midwest. A stranger in a strange land, I was grateful to meet two best friends. One was a girl, with whom I published a neighborhood newsletter, and whose parents were successful artists from Mexico. The other's father had dark skin while her mother was quite fair. The second friend taught me to call the first friend by a term I had heard bandied about by our age-mates. I had no idea the term had to do with skin color or ethnicity; only years later did I realize this middle-school taunt had been cruel and racist.

The first friend's family soon moved away to the city, perhaps an internal migration to flee an environment in which such ignorance could harm their children. This idea is not extreme; my husband and I did the same thing, leaving Arizona when state laws were passed that created fear in, and seemed to target, our young brown children.

In college, I was lucky enough to have been introduced to *son jarocho* and *son huasteco* by Francisco González—certainly not through anything available in the music curriculum at the time.<sup>64</sup> Now, in the *jaranera/o* community, we as a family have found a common ground where the children can feel more ethnically at home,

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<sup>64</sup> In academia, a genre as ancient and canonical as *son jarocho* is still often studied from within disciplines of anthropology or ethnomusicology rather than musicology. It is as if a kind of musical racism that masks underlying ethnic discomfort is operational. At least a book has finally come out on fifteen of *The Other Classical Musics* Michael Church, ed., Boydell & Brewer, 2015. While jazz, the Mande jeli and Andalusian/North African traditions are included, no Native American or Latin ones are. Could this possibly result from the same kind of racism to which Sanchez-Tello refers when writing about how Spanish is considered a “rough” language by some elements of society? In any event, the book is honest enough to admit in its title that it still considers these canons “The Other.”

while their parents are able to bridge cultural boundaries through shared music and *convivencia*.<sup>65</sup> If we experience comfort here, it has not come without challenges and the constant consciousness that we look different. Rarely does anyone say anything, but everyone knows stereotypes about *gringa/os* are hard to completely ignore in the process of accepting us.<sup>66</sup> At times I feel guilty to be “whitening” the ethnic mix at *jaranera/o* occasions, hoping that our presence won’t discourage newcomers, for example. So, my husband and I have engaged in identity reformation processes through the practices. Of course, as parents of Latino children, we had this propensity before we found *Son de Bahía*, but the crucible of ritual traditions in community has “baptized” us into new perspectives.

A number of mixed-ethnicity families participate in the Bay Area community.

Some may navigate interesting processes as well. This example took place recently:

“Jen’s” family, who do not speak English or Spanish, were visiting from the Far East, and she brought them to a fandango. Her background is in ballroom dance and classical music, and I wondered how her family would react. While at first they appeared disoriented, their eyes followed the dancing with growing interest, perhaps comparing it to ballroom. As part of the fandango norm of greeting everyone, my gringo husband, who has spent time in Jen’s country, greeted the parents in their language with the customary gestures, which, as a small display of interculturalism, was not uncommon for a fandango. By the end of the evening, each of the parents had ascended the *tarima* and given a try at *zapateado*, and they left smiling broadly.

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<sup>65</sup>Group music-making has been found by scientists to release endorphins, which enhance elation, and oxytocins, which relieve anxiety (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4179700/>.) Nevertheless, I receive regular criticism from my children that my Spanish-speaking and *jarana* playing are embarrassing compared with those of Latina/o *jaranera/os*. As I am sure this sentiment is accurate and felt throughout the community, I take it in good humor.

<sup>66</sup> In the wake of the presidential 2016 elections, I received a few social media comments pro and con to my insufficiencies as an intersectional feminist and white fragility, which were educational.

These newcomers may not have re-engineered their ethnicities that night, but they did temporarily enjoy practices of a different culture.

Sonia Saldivar locates Chicana feminism as a site in which women of practically any ethnicity, oppressed by dominant colonial cultures such as the white U.S., could struggle in solidarity for material, rather than mere psychological, change.

Her *Feminism on the Border: From Gender Politics to Geopolitics* posits that

“Women of color” for us is a political designation that expresses a solidarity with Asian American, African American, and Native American women who share similarities in our histories under racism and class exploitation and cultural domination in the United States—this kinship extends beyond sharing a national language (48).

However, non-Latina/os without some sort of cultural “in” might never find the *jaranera/o* community at all, much less achieve the level of comfort necessary to mold identities within it. This is a fine point, and perhaps an obvious one. Yet it is essential to understanding the depth of what is overcome when the participation of gringa/os is offered and accepted.<sup>67</sup> Recall that one white interviewee somewhat ethnically identifies with the peoples whose music she performs, which suggests that ethnicity, to her, is more a matter of cultural practices or performativity than of race. The transcendence of physical realities through performativity will never fully endow gringa/os with Latina/o consciousness, but it could enhance the sense of *communitas* and benefits of community solidarity through the energy expended in the process.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> It would be interesting to research whether gringa/os who are drawn to *jaranera/o* culture may have experienced circumstances (for example frequent migration, inter-ethnic families, bullying, etc.) that produced psychological states of alienation from mainstream white society and/or double consciousness.

<sup>68</sup> The 2012 film *Mariachi Gringo* (Speak Productions, Sin Sentido Films) intriguingly depicts a white man from Kansas (where this writer was born) who resolves the clinical anxiety from which he has

## **VI. A. 2. Inclusivity through performing diversity**

Bay Area *jaranera/os* other than those who need to resolve ethnic paradoxes perform identity in the practices, as well. Some community members do so by preserving and sharing traditions from the ethnicity in which they were raised, or by reinforcing ties to traditions from which they have been separated.

Yet, still greater number, virtually everyone, performs diversity. They are, after all, performing practices that originated within a diverse culture. Some are reinforcing the cultural beauty of the genre while yet embodying racial characteristics different from those of its creators. Others perform diversity because the *son* of the region of Mexico from which they hail is not *jarocho*, but rather *huasteco*, *mariachero*, *arribeño*, *jalisciense*, and so on. Diversity is honored when those from multiple backgrounds share an experience, and performativity enables this. As Sra. Beltrán said, “Community is a group of people from different backgrounds and positions who come together to enjoy the same things.”

## **VI. A. 3. Bay Area inclusivity in socio-historical context: a matter of welcoming**

How does inclusivity operate in other *jaranera/o* communities? Is it a value everywhere? No formal survey exists,<sup>69</sup> but anecdotal data is available. Recall the immense relief felt by Ms. Arjona’s father’s family when, as refugees of the Spanish Civil War, they at last found a welcoming refuge in Veracruz. Recall how Ms. John

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long suffered when he meets a gentleman from Guadalajara, and, against his parents’ wishes, begins to learn mariachi. He eventually moves to Guadalajara where he experiences being a minority in both ethnic and gender identities, but ultimately opts to stay there when he begins to function as a *mariachero* in the countryside and finds his anxiety is gone, his joy returned.

<sup>69</sup> Although Martha González’ dissertation book, in preparation, is eagerly awaited.

found a safe space in the Cuernavaca fandango scene. This same sort of welcoming manner is evident today in the Sotavento. Cases from my fieldwork demonstrate:

When our family traveled to Veracruz during the Christmas holiday 2013-14, we had several days before any specific meetings, but were anxious to engage in *son jarocho*. So, on a Sunday afternoon, we took a three-hour bus ride to Santiago Tuxtla, where La Rama festivities were to be held that night. The bus arrived at noon, but the museums were closed for the holidays. Walking around the achingly beautiful town, we saw no signs of the festival, but spotted a young fellow carrying a *jarana*. I impulsively blurted, “Do you know where I could buy a *jarana*?” “Well, yes, we could go to my teacher’s house, Pablo Campechano’s. It’s a little out of town.” We took a cab to a rustic and spacious *rancho* and lutherie. Don Pablo didn’t speak English, but was most gracious, given the spontaneity of this gringo visit during a holiday. We sat and talked under a thatched ramada, strummed *jaranas*, then toured the lutherie and chicken coops.

María Antónia Yan, his wife, helps in the *laudería* and plays *jarana segunda* in the family *grupo*. Presently, their son, Juan, arrived from the port on his way south to a gig. “Juanito” plays *guitarra de son* in the famed band Mono Blanco; we had met briefly in the Bay Area. He chatted amicably with us.

Now we had fallen in love with a handmade *jarana*, so Don Pablo and Doña María drilled strap holes in it. Suddenly we realized we did not have enough cash to pay, and would have to go back to town to find an ATM. This was awkward. Don Pablo’s eyebrow rose a millimeter, but only one eyebrow. His student was probably far more concerned that the strangers wouldn’t come through, but trundled with us back to town and back to his teacher’s again. Thus trust, welcoming and *convivencia* in the Sotavento were demonstrated.

Later during that trip, Ramón Gutiérrez Hernández, of internationally-known band Son de Madera, was equally hospitable when we spent several days (with Cassandra Millsbaugh) visiting his Xalapa lutherie, unexpected, unknown, and making no purchase. Although we were operating outside of the usual social graces, he portrayed nothing but hospitality.

At one point I became worried we wouldn’t find a Veracruz fandango, and posted an urgent request on social media. Jorge Beltrán answered back from the Bay



Area “you are in luck—there is a fandango tonight in Coatepec.” By now we were staying in Xalapa, and Coatepec was half an hour away by taxi. When we arrived, the first few musicians were just starting to tune their instruments. The venue was a 150-year-old cantina, La Estrella de Oro, and was open to the chill air of a winter night in the hills. After several *sones*, the crowd had grown substantially. Suddenly, one of the attendees, Isaias Contreras Alvarado, took the stage and offered a *verso* that he had just improvised for us:

*Cuantas sorpresas depara  
el fandango y su destino  
nos sorprende con su tino  
que aunque distancia separa  
se difunde y prepara  
para hermanar con esmero  
en un abrazo sincero  
California y Veracruz  
Bryan y Robin son luz  
Dos amigos jaraneros.*

The fandango and destiny  
Reveal a few surprises  
They surprise us with their guises  
Though our homes are placed distantly  
They spread and prepare caringly  
Brotherhood that emphasizes  
Sincere embraces as prizes  
California and Veracruz  
Bryan and Robin’s light in hues  
Jaranero friendship arises. (Loose translation mine.)

Within the U.S., communities such as the ones in Seattle and Los Angeles have a reputation for their inclusivity and welcoming. Sanchez-Tello held focus groups in Los Angeles that expressed inclusivity:

... to call oneself a jaranera or jaranero is a political statement tied to liberal and radical politics of inclusion and solidarity with those in struggle, whether

it is movements for immigrant rights, feminism, organizing against police abuse, or retaining cultural heritage under the pressure of American culture and social hierarchies (57).

However, this does not mean that the kinds of minor inclusivity issues found in the Bay Area have not arisen elsewhere. Some issues may also relate less to inclusivity than to the challenges of identity construction. Sanchez-Tello's focus groups, moreover, may have better defined a community identity than criteria for inclusion. While his definition is probably broad enough to include most of those in the Bay Area community, much Bay Area *convivencia* is not overtly political in nature.

#### **VI. A. 4. Gender inclusivity**

When I first encountered *son jarocho*, decades back, genders other than male and female were, like race in Sanchez-Tello's account, still not much discussed in suburban white American or Latin cultures. Saldívar's *Feminism on the Border* examines strategies to overcome hegemonic oppressions of class, race and gender as well as "...internal contradictions within her own, often sexist and homophobic culture" (vi).

Gloria Anzaldúa, famed feminist author of *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), was forthright about her bisexuality and ritual practices for entering a "third space" or *nepantla* as a means of embracing multiple gender and ethnic identities. She wrote about the disapproval, expressed by the men in her family, of her sexual orientation and her writing about controversial episodes involving gender relations in their family history.

While such issues persist today, much has changed. I have not observed genderphobia within the Bay *jaranera/o* community, even after four years. LGBTQ people do participate in the Bay Area scene, with the varying degrees of self-disclosure found everywhere. *Jaranera/o* inclusivity in the Bay Area and in other locales does, in my experience, extend to all gender preferences.

#### **VI. A. 5. Inclusivity and technology**

The recent rise of social media has added a new norm to the Bay Area community, which now hosts a social media site on which anyone who joins may post regarding *jaranera/o* occasions. Newcomers may have to dig and mine to join the page, but then things become easy. Postings announce events as far away as Mexico, but primarily cover San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Santa Clara, and Richmond. As a repository of data, the page serves to quantify the frequency of events around the Bay Area. There are many per month, even per week. One could fill ones entire social calendar, and still not be able to attend all the events.

Moreover, postings of general *jaranera/o* interest are often made several times a day, by any of the members of the page. These include videos of *sones* as performed in different regions, that enable everyone in the Bay Area to study and learn more about *son*'s history and its context. The postings include photographic and video documentation of Bay Area *jaranera/o* events and news. Thus, even those unable to attend certain events are able participate vicariously, and to stay connected in that way.

It was through Bay Area community social media that I was able to locate the fandango in Coatepec when visiting Veracruz. Skype has enabled Maria de la Rosa to complete aspects of trans-border collaborative composition projects with musicians such as Patricio Hidalgo and Rubí Oseguera, remotely! While social media do not replace direct experience, their benefits to community coherence, inclusion and efficacy are apparent. Just by marking a posting about *son* with “like,” support and solidarity are signaled.

Yet, could and should more be done to include others who would benefit from community participation? Only those who know about the media page will be able to access it. Recall the Beltráns’ extraordinary hospitality, their linking it to ancient Mesoamerican traditions, and their desire to preserve such traditions. Recall Maestro Posadas’ exhortation that everyone should spread *son*, start fandangos, and attend them. Too much selectivity, even in attempts to protect the community, would tend to defeat such purposes. Not only is the community in process, but its processes are, too.

#### **VI. A. 6. Individual inclusivity**

Although inclusivity is valued within the Bay Area community, some have dealt with issues ranging from the universal need to find out about events, to more specific concerns. Various participants have made comments such as: “Sometimes it seems hard to fit in because you weren’t in Los Lupeños” or “Sometimes it seems like being...(gringo, female, relatively new, unknowledgeable, etc.) gets in the way of being included.”

These reactions are hard to avoid from time to time, and personal inclusion may be defined across a spectrum, from being asked to dance to being asked to perform in a paid gig. What is interesting about the comments, however, is that they did not issue from one demographic or another—people of all ethnicities, genders and experience levels made them. Once, a male dancer, revered within the community for his skill, commented that he was disappointed that more *sones de pareja* (in which he could dance) were not being played, and left a fandango early.

Those who relate having gone through such feelings at some point or another, generally report later that the problems have subsided. This could be the result of mutual acculturation, through which newer participants and community members came to better know and trust each other. It may also reflect the power of fandango ritual practices to minimize individual concerns, maximize shared experience, and offer participation to all. Even the mention of such feelings would suggest a level of intra-community trust. Moreover, such issues are not unique to Bay Area *sonera/os*; they are common in many kinds of communities. This recalls Francisco González' comment, "It is always this way. Those who care about the music will stay."

#### **VI. A. 7. Artistic inclusivity**

In the Bay Area, a substantial amount of overlap exists among individuals who practice *son jarocho* and individuals who practice other types of music and dance, especially *son*. Occasionally a monthly fandango is dedicated to *son huasteco* or *son mariachero*, complete with differences in repertoire, forms of participation available, and dress. Moreover, performance of *son jarocho* in community settings

allows for contributions of creativity from anyone willing, through the participatory and improvisatory means discussed in chapter 4. One informant, “Ryan,” who was not formally interviewed, shared a variety of thoughts about inclusivity:

When I attended my first fandango, the thing that struck me was how much fun everyone was having. Then I noticed that virtually everyone was involved in the creation of the music. Very different from the typical concert in which the audience and the performers are rigidly separated. I immediately wanted to have that same experience. I had once been a mediocre guitar player, so I watched the *jaraneros* wondering if this was something I could do. During breaks I chatted up some of the players...A *jaranera* handed me her *jarana*, even though I said I was still learning the chords. She wouldn't take no for an answer (sort of "shut up and play.") But this wasn't unique - there were lots of *jaranas* being passed around.

Eventually I felt confident enough to just show up and start playing. I was truly blown away by the excitement and warmth of the others when that happened. There were handshakes and back patting. Periodically I would get polite helpful hints on the best way to hold the instrument or finger chord changes. Ultimately what struck me was that the people truly wanted to include beginners. They had found something they loved doing, and wanted others to share in their enjoyment.

Jerry Garcia once said that at every Grateful Dead performance there were three concerts happening simultaneously without relation to each other. One was the experience the band was having, another the sound crew, and finally the audience. In fandango there is pretty much one experience shared by all.

Ryan added that honoring tradition enhanced the benefits of participation by providing attendees a common language, regardless of what tongue they spoke:

At one fandango, I noticed a group of strangers joining in. It turned out they were in the Bay Area for an unrelated event, heard about the fandango, and decided to drop in. I noticed how easily their playing blended with the rest of the group. It was as if they came every month. I had the same experience when dropping in to a fandango in Mexico. The *sones* were played the same way - same chords, same rhythm patterns, as in the Bay Area. I realized that one of the roles of tradition, in this situation, was to provide a common "language" so that whoever joined in would know how to play.

In section C below, the topic of tradition versus modernity resumes.

## **VI. B. Women: Transcendent presence**

Some of the people who do the community-building have usually been girls...especially in the past, in the work of creating the spaces to do the fandango and to hold the workshops...(Ms. Arjona, chapter 5).

Strengths among women attendees at Bay Area *jaranera/o* events struck me from the very beginning. To gauge the objectivity of this observation, I consulted Chicana feminist sources as well as *jaranera* ethnographies and community members. It turns out that Chicana feminism has materially influenced many U.S. *jaranera/os*, directly or indirectly. Prominent Southern California *jaranera* and professor Martha González is an expert in Chicana feminism. The discipline provides intersectional feminist sites in which to strategize counters to nexuses of multiple oppressions that Latina/os—and others—may seek to transcend.<sup>70</sup> Substantive linkages to *jaranera* practices emerge.

### **VI. B. 1. Chicana (and new materialist) feminist theory**

Some Latinas in the U.S. have confronted complexities such as those documented in case studies by Mónica Russel y Rodriguez, Lucila D. Ek, and Aida Hurtado. Their work discussed cases in which Latinas' families and churches expected them to perform traditional gender roles that privileged men, while schools and white age-mates expected them to perform norms of white culture, even as they wrestled with issues surrounding bilingualism and/or lack of access to economic and educational capital.

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<sup>70</sup> For example, this gringa mother of Latino children has derived great inspiration, advice and solace from the Chicana feminist literature presented here. The urgency of intersectional feminist perspectives for the greater public has been well documented in the wake of the 2016 elections, as well.

To navigate these kinds of conflicting expectations, these writers and others such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Sonia Saldivar, Yolanda Broyles, Chela Sandoval and Emma Pérez propose a variety of strategies for exerting agency in identity construction. Sandoval and Russel y Rodriguez refer to powerful differential *movidas* (practices of upheaval) that “rework stereotypical ideas despite moments that seem to sustain them” (Russel 310). Examples are:

- *strategic essentialism*, a term coined by Gayatri Spivak for performing historicized or stereotypical identities to accrue the power to break free from them;
- *strategic fluidity* that provides the ability to enact agency in spaces created by multiple socializations to construct identities, as described by Ek; and
- *strategic synthesis* that accesses a “third space” of transcendence, potential and empowerment, assisted by ancient archetypes, posed by Anzaldúa.

Russel y Rodriguez studied a woman who had employed strategic essentialism. The woman had gone through a number of relationships in which she performed traditional submission to her male partner. At last on her own, she was struggling economically but finally able to attend night classes and through this to claim agency. Still, her teenaged son’s behavior was intractable.

...It would have been a different story if she had completed college or if she had secured a well-paying job. These steps would have given her the economic resources to...intervene in her son's troubled behavior...without it, (she) saw schooling, not as a resource that could be traded...but as a site in which she could articulate a moment of agency and self-determination. Here, asking the awkward anthropologist's...question, I tried to get this connection through my head:



...So you are saying that going to school didn't equalize things, it didn't give you power to balance things. It gave you power to just say, "I am"?

...That's right. I am. *Yo soy*. And I write it everywhere: *Yo soy* (311).

Another *movida* is strategic fluidity, which involves the performance of multiple identities in rapid succession, according to which hegemonic ecology one momentarily inhabits. Anzaldúa said:

...all these worlds overlap: this is your race, your sexual orientation...here an academic, here an artist, there a blue-collar worker. Where these spaces overlap is *nepantla*, the Borderlands. Identity is process-in-the-making... so you shift, cross the border from one to the other..." (qtd. in Keating 238-9).

This may seem obvious, but it is not easy. Lucila D. Ek follows a U.S.-born teenager who is the daughter of Guatemalan immigrants, a student at a public high school, and a member of a fundamentalist Christian church. She performs her identity differently according to where she is, dressing differently, speaking a different language, regulating her externalization of sexuality. This is not a foolproof *movida*; when her father has her wear a low cut gown and layers of makeup for a *Quinceanera* (traditional fifteenth birthday fiesta) she would rather not have, she is uncomfortable. However, her strategic fluidity does involve agency, and need not be inauthentic. When asked "What's real?" Anzaldúa answered, "It all is!" (Keating 245-6).

Still, the pain of such a strategy should not be underestimated. Anzaldúa described some of the hard choices required:

(As opposed to speaking Chicana Spanish), there's pressure from the Spanish-speaking community...to speak "correct" Castilian and not to assimilate. Then there's pressure from the Anglo society to...just

...speak English...My use of both...my code-switching, is my way to resist being made into something else (qtd. in Keating 248).

She wrote in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* that her grandfather had four *mujeres con familia*, which had hurt her grandmother. Male family members reacted:

When...my brother...read (*Borderlands*), he had a fit. He was going to show it to my uncle, and my uncle was going to sue me because that's his mother...my grandmother...I'm not supposed to write about it. I'm constantly asked by my family to choose my loyalty—to myself or to them. I'm supposed to choose them. I don't and I never have, and that's why I'm accused of betraying my culture, why I'm a bad girl...(qtd. in Keating 260).

Anzaldúa developed a *movida* of strategic synthesis to alleviate such difficulties. This technique rebirths ancient archetypes as empowering guides in a “third space” where contradictory expectations coexist and are transcended. Sheila Contreras revisits this strategy, writing that the third space is one:

...in which those who are not recognized within the “legitimate” constructions of subjectivity—culture, nation, race, sexuality—resist immobilization and ...instead ...redefine the very limits of subjectivity as they negotiate the discursive traffic (in) the “crossroads” of consciousness...sustaining contradictions and residing in the various and liminal ontological, epistemological, and geographical zones that Anzaldúa has named “the borderlands” (116).

The third space is related to the concept of *nepantla*, and provides a locus in which to exercise what Anzaldúa calls the “*Coatlicue* state,” in which multiple potential identities synthesize into one. Contreras notes a key distinction between strategic fluidity and strategic synthesis in the third space: the former involves shifting from one identity to the next, while the latter, the third space,

houses simultaneity or synthesis of multiple identities. She elaborates another defining aspect of Anzaldúa's third space:

...its reinvestment in pre-Columbian myth...Coatlicue (the ancient mother goddess whose skirt and head house snakes) is configured to prompt *mestizas* to recover lost traditions and initiate alternate forms of consciousness (in which) assumptions about female subjectivity...are refigured as...positive and unique...to create a "third space" that can accommodate those who are "two in one body, both male and female" (116).

Martha González adopted an ancient female figurine as a symbol for her transnational composition project, "Entre Mujeres," even as Maestro Posadas, los Beltrán, and other *jaranera/os* of the Bay Area participate in pre-conquest traditions. Anzaldúa's third space is not limited to androgynous performances of gender, but offers a crucible for many kinds of identity formation—ethnic, spiritual, etc. Nor is the help available limited to *Coatlicue*. Anzaldúa also invokes the ancient figures of La Llorona, La Malinche, and the Virgin of Guadalupe as "*last tres madres*." La Llorona literally means "the weeping woman;" her ancient story, which included her victimization, have often been reduced to that of an evil ghost mother who will spirit away naughty children. Anzaldúa sees her weeping as a metaphor for the feminine condition, voice and expressivity:

I've recuperated La Llorona to trace how we go from...the wailing of suffering and grief to the *grito* (scream) of resistance, and on to the *grito* of celebration and joy...she encourages me to take personal and collective setbacks...and turn them around...(qtd. in Contreras, 116).

Of course, neither all Latina/os nor all *jaranera/os* embrace Anzaldúa's strategies. However, some indigenous Mesoamerican concepts that have survived since before the conquest have regarded identity as shared and empowered by inner deities or

archetypes. In the still widespread, if somewhat underground, *Nahualismo*, each person has an internal *nahual* identity who might be likened to a double, a spirit guide, or a magical animal self. Anzaldúa refers to encounters with her *nahual* in *nepantla*; the concept has been documented by Maria de Baratta and Barbara Tedlock, among others. Moreover, such concepts are consistent with beliefs of other cultures; Anzaldúa references the presence of weeping women in Mayan and Nigerian peoples (Keating.) La Llorona's transcultural origins make her the ideal subject for at least one *son jarocho*, but the third space and ancient archetypes are, of course, not subject to positivist modes of thought. They transcend them just as they provide means of transcendence to their visitors.

Other Chicana feminists invoke transcendence in ways that move still closer to *son jarocho* as a possible tactic. Sonia Saldivar examines "...places not usually recognized as sites of 'theory' by women and men in charge of the modes of cultural production..." to highlight strategies for overcoming economic and ethnic oppressions as well as "...internal contradictions within her own, often sexist and homophobic culture" (vi). The author distances herself from Western feminist tactics aimed merely at gaining access to the forms of power and agency wielded by a male-centric white hegemony. Instead, she invokes Latina writings and *testimonios*, re-defining tactics, power and agency for material results that benefit society as a whole:

Hegemony has so constructed the idea of method and theory that often we cannot recognize anything is different from what the dominant discourse constructs...we have to look in non-traditional places...(48-9).

Here, critical theory embodies transcendence, even as it signifies artistic and communal means to achieve it. In this regard, *son jarocho* practices of music, dance, poetry and *convivencia* offer additional means. Whereas it is possible to locate:

...a site of cultural production in the domestic space, with...grandmother in the kitchen and...mother pondering the economic difficulties the extended family faced...(Unfortunately, the)...material realities of life in the urban barrio or ghetto cannot sustain...a tradition which relies...on close family networks...(of) generations of people living in the same town or barrio...What was once a communal production of Latino culture can no longer be sustained under the pressures of capital, because the “way of life that kept Latina tales re-told”...is falling apart (49-50).

Thus, Saldívar “wrestles her ally” of first world feminism,

further expanding the Chicana feminist agenda around issues in the U.S. of gender, race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation...(and presenting) material geopolitical issues that redirect feminist discourse, what I call “feminism on the border” (53-4).

Her strategies must transcend borders between disciplines as well as countries. This need springs from the various kinds of intersectional oppressions that any particular person might encounter: indigenous cultures, in which women were respected, being decimated by colonial forces; men who must migrate to make a living wage; men who cannot find a living wage; women heading impoverished households; children without male role models; children developing double consciousness due to racism and classism; and many more dynamics, all instigated in no small part by U.S. policies such as immigration injustice.<sup>71</sup> For Saldívar and others, it is not clear that the root cause of Chicana/o gender oppression is men; but it is clear that the solution has to involve the mitigation of all the oppressions, and that hers is not the only

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<sup>71</sup> Immigration injustice implies a point of view I take based on policies that decimate Latina families and the U.S.’ breaking of commitments in this regard under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

culture that has these needs. Saldivar thus gives voice to multiple sites of subaltern, non-hegemonic, non-academic experiences.

The strategy of giving voice is well known to ethnic Yaqui and Chicana feminist Yolanda Broyles-González. When she successfully sued the University of California, Santa Barbara, to remedy the lower pay she received as a woman, she refused to accept a gag order, which was standard in the school's settlements.<sup>72</sup> She explained:

I value my freedom of speech, the dream of equality, and my dignity as a native woman of color more than I value institutional rewards accorded to those who are silent and condone the institutional status quo...In Native American tradition, to be silenced is to be dead. Your word is your gold (R. Rodriguez).

While some of its words may be coded, little is silent about the *son jarocho* genre. Scores of *jaranas*, singing, and *zapateado* percussion make for loud performing forces. *Versadores* improvise impromptu lyrics to suit current events, giving voice.

Chela Sandoval describes alternative strategies she calls “differential *movidas*.” The term “differential” references the mechanism of a car’s transmission which disengages gears enabling any gear to be selected next. Sandoval poses non-verbal artistic media, and love, as tactics for dissolving or transcending ingrained structures in favor of a more equitable society:

Differential consciousness is linked to whatever is not expressible through words. It is accessed through poetic modes of expression: gestures, music, images, sounds, words that plummet or rise through signification to find some void...This mode of consciousness both inspires and depends on differential

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<sup>72</sup> It is worth noting that she chose her attorney because he had won an age-discrimination-in-hiring suit brought against UCSC by Rodolfo Acuña, who had run the Latina/o Studies Department at CSU Northridge for over a decade, when that legendary Chicano activist was 62 years old. Broyles-González is married to Francisco González, interviewed in chapter 5.

social movement ...yet it functions outside speech, outside academic criticism, in spite of all attempts to pursue and identify its place of origin... This...is designed in a multiplicity of forms, from revolt to religious experience, from *rasquache* to punk...it is a conduit brought about by any system of signification capable of evoking and puncturing through to another site...of differential consciousness...

Third world writers such as Guevara...Anzaldúa, Emma Pérez...similarly understand love as a “breaking” through whatever controls in order to find “understanding and community”: it is described as “hope” and “faith” in the potential goodness of some promised land; it is defined as Anzaldúa’s *coatlicue* state, which is a “rupturing” in one’s everyday world that permits crossing over to another; or as a specific moment of shock, what Emma Pérez envisions as the trauma of desire, of erotic despair...These writers...understand “love” as a hermeneutic, as a set of practices and procedures that can transit all citizen-subjects, regardless of social class, toward a differential mode of consciousness... (138-9).

Sandoval’s ideas could apply to *son jarocho* as practiced in the Bay Area community.

Tactics include poetic modes of expression; *son* functions beyond academic critiques and efforts to identify its origins; it is used for revolt (resistance) and religious experience (puncturing through the status quo to sites of “beauty,” “medicine,” “nobility,” *communitas*, transcendence.) Martha González cites Emma Pérez’ work as having inspired her. Anzaldúa’s work also involves exploration of transcendence. As Latinas and others confront intersecting oppressions, Sandoval seeks *movidas* (breakthrough tactics) that are different, alternative, and non-hegemonic in origin.

She offers love:

To fall in love means that one must submit, however temporarily, to...a state of being not subject to control or governance. It is at this point that the drifting being is able to pass into...the abyss (where) subjectivity can become freed from ideology as it binds and ties reality...But the process of falling in love is not the only entry to this realm, for the “true site of originality and strength” is neither the lover nor the self. Rather, it is the “originality of the relation”...(139-40).

People speak of *son jarocho* in terms that recall Sandoval's concept of love. "I'm always happy when I'm here doing this," "It's more important than school and career," "I knew I wanted to keep doing this," "It's like in the Wizard of Oz, going from black and white to in color," "You're gonna get addicted," "What IS this," "It's the beauty, the community, the inclusiveness"—the originality of the relation. Their comments are brief, as if in acknowledgment that words do not lend themselves to describing deep experiences.

The act of falling in love can thus function as a "punctum," that which breaks through social narratives to permit a bleeding, meanings unanchored and moving away from their traditional moorings...It is love that can access and guide our theoretical and political *movidas*—revolutionary maneuvers toward decolonized being ... (139-40).

Perhaps what is afoot in the Bay Area community is love. We may become proactively unanchored from even time-space moorings when practicing *sones* like "Balajú." As defined by Sandoval, love is what enables people to transcend ethnic paradoxes and access greater, more whole identities. It has helped to resolve individual conflicts. It has enabled inclusivity of "the Other." Love, here, is a technique to overcome oppressive conditions, and it is also a force that promotes community—perhaps the community that was lost when, in Saldivar's words, "a communal way of life could not be sustained under the pressures of capital."

Pérez references the work of Sandoval and Anzaldúa in *The Decolonial Imaginary*. She attributes some Chicana issues to imaginaries of colonial times, narratives that often sexed women as evil. She argues "that the differential mode of consciousness to which Sandoval refers is precisely third space feminist practice, and



that practice can occur only within the decolonial imaginary” (xvi). She offers this imaginary as “a political project for reconstructing histories” (4), adding:

Ultimately, the point is to move beyond colonialist history by implementing the decolonial imaginary with a third space feminist critique to arrive finally at postcoloniality, where postnational identities may surface (125).

Pérez recognizes *movidas* that suggest the arts and performativity:

For us today, the lines between the real and the imaginary are blurred. Many of us try with our passions to reconstruct the epics, dramas, comedies and tragedies in a narrative that will echo “truth” (xv).

Performative strategies—which Pérez calls political projects—appear in various Bay Area *jaranera/o* activities, as discussed in section A above. They also emerge in the recent global critical turn toward new materialist feminism, which privileges performativity and transformation over fixed identity, and views time as non-linear and inventive, theory as immanent and creative (Coleman, 30). This reifies the importance of performing decolonizing societal imaginaries, with modes of thought that support practices for doing so:

Such a mode of immanent thinking is important to the disruption of time as the progression from past to present to future... This idea that time is non-linear and multidirectional—relational rather than causal—is important for understanding ...a phenomenon in which both nature and culture have reciprocal effects... (and) for understanding images of transformation in two ways. First... images of transformation... promise of a better future... in suggesting that transformation is necessary... this future as potential is brought into the present... as the need to change and transform now. In this sense, images of transformation can be understood as working through an intensive or immanent time, where time does not (only) move from the present to the future, but where the future is experienced in and as the present, as that which must be acted on now (39-40).

Coleman also discusses the relative merits of creative immanent potential of matter, and of feminist theory too, recalling again the decolonial imaginary as a transformative, political, performative and transcendent strategy:

...perhaps the uncoupling of feminist theory from linear temporality is a way of seeing feminism not as over and done with, but as being done immanently. Such a project is political... Rather than seeing feminist theory in terms of progress—as the unfolding of linear trajectories that lead to a better future—an understanding of inventive feminist theory would place emphasis on the performativity of our ways of observing, describing and intervening in the worlds we are part of (42).

It would seem new materialists have learned from Chicana feminism. Further, Rachel Loewen Walker brings a quantum perspective as she theorizes that:

By collapsing the binary between the real and representational, ‘life itself’ becomes the *affective capacity of matter*, where ‘life’ is neither actual nor virtual, but instead a spatio-temporal relationality that constitutes singularities and meaning through the dynamism of an *intra-active* becoming... Individual entities—matter, human, non-human, discourse, nature and culture—then, only find meaning or expression through their co-creative connections and entanglements with other entities. As the process by which this activity occurs, *intra-action* is to be distinguished from ‘interaction’, such that the latter refers to the interactions of individual agencies... while the former looks at the ways in which these distinct agencies are themselves formed through their engagement (49).

Walker’s intra-activity recalls the Buddhist concept that form is emptiness because of its constant transformation. It also recalls the newly mourned artist Prince, who transcended colonial, capitalist notions of gender and ethnic identity in performative ways, offering the immanently creative lyric “I’m not a woman, I’m not a man, I am something that you’ll never understand.” Just so, Pérez writes:

Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write (xiv).

Ana María Ochoa writes of the music of boatmen in colonial Columbia, a genre that, like *son jarocho*, has ethnically diverse origins:

Such musical praxis for the creation of new forms of vocalization that emerged from the encounter between different entities is conceived less as something that originates in an autonomous work and more as an ongoing process of transformation (loc. 1551).

Surely, many Bay Area *sonera/os* embody decolonial imaginaries and transformational performativity by default rather than plan; still, they reap modes of transcendence such as Sandoval's concept of love as a political *movida* accessible only through nonverbal means such as the arts. In this vein, Prince described in an interview shortly before his death how music enabled him to transcend:

Last night, he says, he sat there alone, after everyone else had gone home, and played and sang for three hours straight. "I just couldn't stop," he says, he'd got "in the zone, like an out-of-body experience": it felt like he was in the audience watching himself. "That's what you want. Transcendence. When that happens"—he shakes his head—"Oh, boy" (Petridis, "Prince").

He had used the arts to turn double consciousness back upon itself.

In the Bay Area, performing identity and diversity has impacted women's material realms: interviewees note transcendent shifts in women's roles. To gauge the significance of this, awareness of parallel contexts is helpful. Examples follow, after which come comments from Bay Area *jaranera/os* about how women's roles have evolved, and how artistic practices reflect this.

### **VI. B. 2. Bay Area *jaraneras* in context**

Women as performers and organizers in the Bay Area *son jarocho* community have many sisters in other communities. Some are famous; in Los Angeles, Martha

González and her sister-in-law Xochi Flores have accomplished much. Their influence has spread internationally as they tour, publish, record, and receive awards. Both Flores and González are mothers of school-aged children and wives of prominent musicians. Yet they have clearly engraved the feminine silhouette onto images of U.S. *son jarocho* scenes. González has also mounted transnational composition and recording projects with women who reside in Veracruz and find it difficult to travel due to childrearing.<sup>73</sup> She first connected with them during extended visits to Veracruz, and maintains contact through technology. Both González and Flores manage fanbases. Flores' is centered around Cambalache, a *son jarocho* band in which she plays along with her Veracruzian husband. González' stems from Quetzal, her grammy-award winning band named after its leader, her husband; from her work in Seattle where she got her Ph.D.; and from her activities at Scripps College where she teaches. Many more women are *jaranera/os* in the Los Angeles area, and more than a few have achieved recognition.

In Mexico, Natalia Arroyo Rodríguez, Rubí Oseguera Rueda, Wendy Cao and Laura Reboloso are among internationally-known *soneras jarochas*. Many more Mexican women have taken up *son jarocho* in their places of residence, especially since the genre has been *rescatado* (rescued, revived) over the past few decades. As Ms. Arjona related in her interview, public radio helped to spread the sound through Mexico during the 1990's. Ms. John told of finding a fandango community in

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<sup>73</sup> This difficulty reflects issues ranging from visa difficulties to traditional gendered role expectations of mothers to stay at home with their children; however, the latter may also be a value and choice for many women in Mexican cultures.

Cuernavaca, in the state of Morelos. I have spoken with with Arroyo Rodríguez, Oseguera, and Cao, and taken workshops with the former two. Their professionalism and artistry is inspiring. Yet, they have had to manage gender-based expectations to attain their status.

Oseguera, *zapateadist* for the group Son de Madera, wrote her ethnographic anthropology thesis about the lives of Sotavento village women in her 1998 *Biografía de una Mujer Veracruzana (Biography of a Veracruzana Woman.)* The thesis deals with issues of poverty, women as heads of households--containing both children that are theirs by birth and others abandoned to their care, domestic violence, child mortality, and other aspects of life in a countryside on which men find it ever more difficult to earn livings by traditional means, due to incursions of Western technology.

We visited the lutherie of Pablo Campechano Gorgonio in Santiago Tuxtla. His wife, María Antónica Yan Mozo, plays *jarana segunda* with the family musical *grupo*, Los Campechano, and also assists indispensably. Don Pablo is the leader of the *grupo*. In a recent documentary “Son de a montón, son de Campechano,” his children appear playing and dancing throughout. Yan Mozo does not appear for twenty-three minutes, then briefly declares her affinity for the *son* “Colás.” Their son, Juan Campechano Yan of the *grupo* Mono Blanco, describes the ways in which she supports the family’s music as her “great role and support” —preparing the instruments and clothes, caring for the younger children, keeping everyone happy. Don Pablo discusses how his children have been steeped in *son* since they were

babies. The generational contrast is subtle and it may be Yan Mozo's desire to maintain a low profile. Even though traditional gender roles influence the experiences of some *sonera/os*, Westerners may perceive this differently than *sonera/os* within their own culture, which has strong ties to Native American beliefs that see the traditional roles of men and women as equally important.

Rubí Oseguera frequently reminds her workshop students of this distinction. However, her ethnography does not shrink from discussing historically more egregious conditions. Toward the end, a composite informant who has endured years of domestic abuse tries to kill her husband with a machete. This comes after she has taken her children to a hiding place. After he spends a night drinking, he finds them and falls face-down upon his daughter. It is not clear what he intends, but the mother becomes infuriated and goes for the machete, while her sons try to protect the husband. The mother comments "I figured if I had to spend a few years in jail, at least we will be rid of him" (my trans.; 43-4). The book offers images of absentee fathers who spend their earnings on drink rather than food or healthcare for the family. There are daughters who get pregnant and work nights to make ends meet. Episodes of men taunting or ridiculing women appear, as well. However, the women's responses frequently recall Nietzsche's "that which does not kill us makes us stronger." Yes, some suffer egregiously, but some go on to remarry good men, or to head households and hold their heads high knowing that they are performing an exalted task in raising

their children and preserving community.<sup>74</sup> Women embody this in the carriage of their heads in *jaranera/o* dancing.

Passages in Oseguera's book reflect ideas about embodied knowledge in dance, about intersectional oppressions, and about *movidas* for transcending them. The work has the feel of one of Saldivar's *testimonios*. I asked Oseguera who the protagonist is and she explained that she is a composite of different informants. Here are some excerpts:

... the idea here is to show how women, who participate in a public festive environment such as the fandango, live; how they feel the music and what role the fandango plays in a determined moment of their life through a code that belongs to the body; women make use of their bodies, the most sacred and the least known part of themselves...(my trans.; 12).

...Son jarocho creates and recreates feelings through music: campesinos that lyrically compose and improvise, body movements, verses...The fandango is the place to develop talent and reconstruct the historical memory of the people of southern Veracruz. The poetry tells the life of the country. Doubtless, cultural expressions stay here, in the people, in the oral tradition, in the poetry that informs and registers data for posterity...

Once there were cattle ranches; today they are legends. Now there are fiestas, fandangos, women, girls, grandmothers who reconstruct and maintain the tradition that has survived the great industrial rise in the region, the economic need, the ethnic rearrangements and the governmental strictures...(my trans.; 11-12).

It was a 27 of December...I'm not sure how many years ago...the *jaranas* were tuning up, the women were swishing across the improvised temple, the sky threatened to drop its December tears and prevent the fiesta: there were

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<sup>74</sup> The term "exalted" as used here not only signals traditional images like the Virgin Mary; it also suggests ancient Mesoamerican deities and myths, as well as women's innate embodied knowledge. Coatlicue, like the Hindu Kali enveloped in snakes and skulls, is perhaps the best-known Mesoamerican mother goddess. In the Sotavento, the town Cozamaloapan is named for the goddess of floods; the town Tixel is a Mayan term for the goddess of rainbows; both signify fertility. Ayotzontli, "400 Turtles," is another name for the goddess of fertility and birthing, based on the immense number of eggs the turtle lays and the obvious pain she feels while doing so.

many people, crowding in from everywhere. These were the patron saint fiestas...you had to play, to dance all night...

The women had to stretch their legs, they had to dust off the *tarima* with agile, calm, tired, syncopated movements...they had to return to experience the *son*, to improvise, to laugh and to fall in love...(my trans.; 13).

The composite protagonist tells us:

Before they played very slowly. This way you never got tired even though you danced all night long, although I get tired now because of age, but before I never tired...Now the musicians play a *son* and speed it up. I've seen many changes within the fandango, for example, now the dancers make *mudanzas* each time a musician sings a verse; before no, before they made *mudanzas* whenever they wanted to...

I remember when I was a girl, how they courted me in the fandangos, with the hat. They brought cases of beer to my mama, put them beside the *tarima* and she shared them out to all my friends, the women were getting drunk because they brought case after case. At times the men would ask me to "dance their hat" which meant put on their hat and dance with them...You had to dance with it on ... my mama said "Look, girl, when you go to the fandango tell the guys that court you that, if they want to give you something, better it should be money instead of water or beer, so the other ladies are those who get drunk." So the men had to bring money and they had to ask your sister and mama to dance if they were courting you (my trans.; 23-4).

The account describes how to wear flowers to indicate marital status as well as the extended process of preparing fandango clothes without washers and dryers.<sup>75</sup> The protagonist's mother would scold and slap her because she didn't want to do chores on fandango day, and:

Sometimes the guys stopped dancing but forgot to take back their hats; and so I said "I didn't come to carry your hat, I came to dance!" This was because if I had somebody's hat on, nobody else would ask me to dance or court me...(it)

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<sup>75</sup> The preparation of the garments is an important part of fandango ritual, performed by women who take great pride in the arts involved in creating of their clothes. Even among Bay Area *jaraneros/os*, to wear clothes handmade in Veracruz imbues status.



didn't mean you were in a relationship...But you always went to fandango with your mama, aunt, sisters or brothers.

Before I got married, there were strict rules of visitation by my fiancé, and I had to be escorted at all times (including when going to relieve myself in the outside facilities of my home after dark) (my trans.; 28).

Now that I am married, it is my husband who puts restrictions on my going to dance fandangos! But one night he said I could go, but had to be back on the stroke of midnight. I said to myself, "*Pa' su mecha!*" (loosely, "as if" or "screw you") (my trans.; 29).

This book documents a situation in which women exerted agency in spite of social consequences, and in which they created solutions for economically suboptimal conditions. The degree of this agency varied from going to fandangos without permission, to going only with escort, to having to dance someone's hat, to dancing the hat not translating to any particular significance, to making money for it. Moreover, women's contributions to the festivities were vital: they set up the spaces and took charge of many logistics. At least historically, fandango observances both acknowledged and parodied relations between the sexes. Women danced with pride based not in external recognition, but at least in part, in internal self-sufficiency, internal strength.

Oseguera references gendered norms that long echoed throughout Mexico and into the U.S. (and are now in decline.) For example, women needed escorts wherever they went, as depicted in films such as Luis Valdez' films *Zoot Suit* and *La Bamba*. A college friend once invited me to the East Los Angeles neighborhood of his youth, to hear a practice of the band with whom he was playing traditional Mexican music. (Los Lobos.) He joked that he was going to let me out of the car, have me walk

through the *barrio*, and pick me up on the other side. The unspoken punch line was that walking unescorted, I would be seen as a gringa of questionable morals with uncertain consequences. Sonia Saldivar describes the issue as reported to her in a 1987 *testimonio*:

(Elvia) Alvarado plots her transition from individual woman who joined a “mother’s club”...to politically aware feminist...(and) presents a scathing critique of leftist men whose politics do not extend to women’s rights...She understands that in her work throughout the Honduran countryside, a woman travelling without a male escort can be perceived as a sexual threat to other women...“They talk a good line about ‘the role of women,’ but when it comes to their women—well, that’s a different story. I’ve never even seen the wives of some of the leaders, they’re so well hidden” (253-6).

As noted in some of the chapter 5 interviews, roles of women have been historically constrained not only in personal travel, but also in music-making. Vergara de los Ríos, et al. document the difficulties of preserving village musical traditions due to the men having to leave their home villages to find work. In Palmillas, a town in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, the men had been the only repositories of oral tradition for playing instruments, singing, and even dance, in community traditions. Women simply did not inherit that aspect of *costumbres*; however, they played critical roles in preparing garments, venues and food. Similar situations occur at least as far south as Guatemala (Navarrete Pellicer 125).

Conversely, at the fandango I attended in Coatepec, many gifted women danced, played and sang with apparently modern levels of agency. Several of them, I learned, also offer workshops and classes in *zapateado*.

In writing about Latina/o literature and culture, I bring the outsider's gaze of a Western *gringa* who knows only what little she has read or experienced. Although my intentions are to portray respect for the great strengths I've seen offered to and taken from *jaranera/o* community music in spite of obstacles -- at a time when many more people could benefit from the community practices and when others in musical academia have not come forward to write about them -- still I recognize the potential to come across as out of place, and offer deepest apologies, regrets and olive branches should this be the case.

Meanwhile, significant narratives of disrespect for women remain in mainstream U.S. culture, producing resonance and valencies for sisterhood.<sup>76</sup> Again, narratives like these may be dissimulated or diminishing in some contexts. Moreover, a number of Latina/o cultures have preceded the U.S. in electing female heads of state, or legalizing same-sex marriage. The reason for revisiting painful histories here is to frame the progressive, if not extraordinary, nature of any community, such as any of a number of *jaranera/o* ones, that actively recognizes and embraces women as leaders and integral members. The next section revisits examples.

### **VI. B. 3. Bay Area *jaraneras* speak**

Contributions by women in the *Bahía* scene include many that involve organization of programs and events, and other activities often thought of as traditionally "feminine" arts. In addition, women make significant interventions

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<sup>76</sup> My own upbringing, of mid-western parents, included expectations, at a young age, of fulfilling all the tasks normally expected of grown women, while maintaining strict chastity, shaming feminine aspirations like marriage, and aiming for straight A's, college and a career. I was not welcomed back home after undergraduate school, nor offered encouragement to go on to grad school. Etc.

historically associated with men. Examples include leading weekly workshops and monthly fandangos; serving as *impresarias* for visiting Veracruz artists (like Rubí Oseguera, Andres Flores, Joel Cruz Castellanos, Patricio Hidalgo, Mono Blanco, Los Vega, Son de Madera, etc.); creating and funding transnational projects to write new *sones*; starting *grupos* featuring women which perform at venues through the Bay Area (like Dia Pa' Son, Luna Sol y Tierra, Tarimba, and Mariachi Femenil Orgullo Mexicano, etc.).

Recall Broyles-González' comments that within Native American tradition, “your word is your gold.” *Jaranera/os*' words convey their strengths, their challenges, and their differential, performative *movidas*. Maestro Posadas has said: “I believe the role of women in every field—economic, political, artistic, whatever—should be the same, should be equal.” Others have said “We don't sing music that degrades women,” and:

It has changed over time...due to mutual and concerted efforts on the parts of men and women artists on both sides of the border. Historically, there haven't been many women musicians and even less that were part of performing ensembles...none as formal leaders of groups...in Veracruz itself--women were dancers and singers, but rarely if ever, *jaraneras* or other musicians...In the cultural interchanges between Veracruz and the Bay Area (in) the late 80s (and) early 90s, women *son jarocho* artists never traveled on their own to do residencies here in the Bay Area and were never on tour on their own—only as part of male-led ensembles.

As the revival of *son jarocho* has taken place in Veracruz, though, more and more women musicians have emerged and, in addition to women dancers and singers, it is common to see *jaraneras*...in Veracruz. And, as of the turn of this century, some women are traveling on their own doing residencies, performing, and leading groups and artistic projects...these changes have also taken place here in the Bay Area...through direct action on the part of *sonera/os* both here and in Veracruz through a sustained cultural exchange

and dialogue...I have undoubtedly been inspired artistically and personally by these changes...

In 2006, local *jaranera/os*, led by male musicians, opened the door for and promoted Annahi Hernandez' residency. I think this was the first time a woman *son jarocho* artist was here on her own, giving classes and participating in the local music scene.

Maestro Artemio was one of those who supported me—as I believe he always supported other women artists...because of the progressive attitudes of plenty of Bay Area women artists, their female colleagues who supported their work, and the progressive attitudes of some key male colleagues, doors have been opened and conditions have developed such that there are now a number of female *son jarocho* community members in leadership roles and more female instrumentalists than there were even four years ago (de la Rosa chapter 5).

Others have noted:

I've heard some comments that the *son jarocho* scene in the Bay Area was predominantly female for a long time, and that it's only the last few years that more men have been getting involved and evening out the gender balance.

Still others have made use of these changes to performatively exorcise the past:

I was tired of the machismo. *Son jarocho* was always a safe and welcoming space, where I was encouraged by men and women alike. Even in the mariachi scene ...women musicians have been put off by experiences involving machismo, and that's why we founded our own all-female group.

While another performative *movida* honors and transforms the past transcendently:

I do not mind the work. I grew up with a house full of people and I like, I really like, to have a house full of people. My son helps me.

The comments reveal a variety of perspectives on the history of the Bay Area scene and how women's roles have evolved. This project does not try to measure the relative amount of work done by one gender or another. Everyone works, and everyone's contribution is key. However, this project does attempt to acknowledge

extraordinary efforts and transformations apparent to even casual observers. It takes cues from Chicana feminists who advocate that women's problems do not exist in isolation, and proposes that energy expended returns to those who expend it in both direct and indirect ways. It is consistent with indigenous and other transcendent modes of thought that if *jaranera/os* embrace traditionally "feminine" arts such as cooking, sewing, weaving, welcoming, teaching and entertaining, as critical parts of a larger, indivisible whole, then all of the transcendent, social and material benefits that accrue from performing arts in community, return to the doers in proportion to the amount of effort they expend, regardless of the nature of the effort. This is a dynamic I have observed and experienced, so it comes up again in the section on Transcendence. In addition, as a differential *movida*, embracing the so-called feminine arts opens doors to participation as a performing musician, by providing audiences and opportunities for preparation in non-threatening ways. This is not a *movida* of strategic essentialism, but rather it is one of essential strategies—strategies without which there would be no fandango, no participation, no performance. Performativity, of course, takes place regardless of which specific community activities an individual *chooses*. Choice is the crucial word, because it is what Bay Area *jaranera/os* now have when considering how to deploy themselves.

One woman, a professional teacher and performing artist, often brings homemade dishes to events. Another chooses not to do so, bringing something prepared commercially or nothing at all, and primarily participates in music and dance. Many women strum *jaranas*; a few also play plucked strings. Some who play

no instruments compose, improvise and sing. Some who cook regularly also sing, play and dance. Some just dance. Some just watch. The key is to show up, as Posadas says:

But you should go to the fandango, the *huapango*, the fandango *mariachero*. If you want to play *son*, you should go to these.

This is not new thought, as familiar nuggets from urban legend recall:

Showing up is not all of life—but it counts for a lot (H. Clinton).<sup>77</sup>  
Eighty percent of success is showing up (W. Allen).

More specific to differential *movidas*, and the performativity choices and improvisations available in fandangos, is Tina Fey's:

Acting is really about showing up that day and telling the writers what you feel like saying.

So, what do *jaraneras* feel like saying or performing? Is success defined as transformation, transcendence, or something else? Why do women return again and again to community fandangos and events?

“It’s the beauty. The community, the music, the inclusivity.”

“Once I am there, my energy comes back. It’s my medicine.”

“It provided a safe space when things were stressful, with this beautiful participative music.”

“I like, I really like, to have a house full of people.”

“I feel so compelled by the rhythm...it moves me a lot. It gets me close-in...I like the participatory aspect, the collectiveness that it creates. I like the fact that if you have something to contribute, you can bring it into the mix.”

“Being a woman in Mexican music has taken me all kinds of amazing places.”

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<sup>77</sup> Perhaps she could have better heeded her own advice.

“If being an activist is defending what you believe in and your roots, than I think we are.”

“I can see the appeal of this musical tradition to women. There’s something that resonates for women about expressing your sentiments through song and dance, and we love to dress so simply yet elegantly with rebozos, etc.”

“We are keeping the traditions alive and transmit what we are learning to others, especially to younger generations.”

“All ages participate. People play standing or sitting in a circle (not facing an audience.) Participants come and go as they please. Dancing, singing, storytelling, and the recitation of poetry are most welcome. Food and drink abound. This musical circle feels welcoming and safe...”

“I was hooked and knew I wanted to keep doing it.”

“If I wanted to continue with my passion (this music) I would have to leave my career.”

If words are gold, do actions speak louder? Bay Area women come back. They step up to the plate. They organize and publicize, perform for pay or not, offer workshops for pay or not, while working day jobs and pursuing other projects and responsibilities.

Possibly, some of the most important contributions and *movidas* are the least visible. In *jaranera/o* contexts, unlike many Western artistic milieus, children are generally welcome and encouraged; this *movida* enables mothers to participate. Moreover, sometimes women who never sing, play or dance make all of the difference as to whether an event succeeds or fails, behind the scenes. Examples of only personal experiences are available, due to the invisibility of these *movidas*:

A friend asked me to bring her 13-year-old daughter and younger son to a fandango. The son fit right in with the other boys, and the daughter started to play with two little dogs that were romping around where I was playing *jarana*. The hosts’ puppy became excited, jumped up trying to lick the girl,



and accidentally grazed the skin under her eye. A streak of bright red blood was suddenly running down her face, right in the middle of the *son* circle. I rushed her to the bathroom to clean it off, and realized that two of the women, who generally sat quietly during fandangos, had left the circle and followed me. They did not speak English, but they were more worried about the child than about any problems this had caused the music, the party, or the hosts. Sharing the terror and working together to clean up the wound and calm the girl, we bonded beyond language, in a commonality of priorities. (The girl healed completely within a few days.)

On another occasion:

At a restaurant, some *jaranera/o* friends were playing. They had placed a *tarima* in front of the stage, but nobody danced. The music sounded odd without the *zapateado*. Finally I asked Maestro's wife, who attended all the events and fandangos but never danced, why nobody was dancing. She said, "Let's go!" and pulled me up to the *tarima* for "La Bamba," which has a demanding *zapateado* part. This was the only time many of us had ever seen her dance. She did it because she saw a need to be filled that transcended her custom of leaving the *tarima* to others. (An appreciated unspoken message for me was acceptance, which felt warmly welcoming.)

Women's roles, during colonial times, had been constrained for many reasons. As with other aspects of *son* that reflect diversity within adversity, women found alternate ways, differential *movidas*, to exert agency and community. Now, post-modern adoption of broader roles by women has revindicated feminized, community-oriented value sets that enable the traditional benefits to rekindle and accrue, as well.

### **VI. C. Transcendent activism**

At a workshop in Berkeley, a student asks Veracruzian maestro Andres Flores, "Would you say *son jarocho* is a music of resistance?" He answers, "It has always been a music of resistance." Later, I ask Daniel Sheehy the same question and he says, "Oh yes. In the nineteenth century a soldier was shot in the streets for performing 'Los Enanos.'"

The scene and the literature about it are rife with anecdotes linking *son jarocho* to the political. Martha González' dissertation's title is telling: *Artivistas* (which combines the word “art” with “activists”.) Sanchez-Tello writes of Los Angeles *jaranera/os* identifying themselves in political solidarity with causes related to diversity, migration rights, etc. Chicana feminists remind us that help for Latinas is inseparable from activism against economic, racial and political injustices. Every year an *encuentro* (large-scale, multi-community fandango) is held at the high fence on the border between Mexico and the U.S. where it meets the Pacific Ocean. *Sonera/os* located both in Mexico and in the U.S. dance, sing and play together--through the grillwork of the fence.

In the Bay Area, many *jaranera/os* participate frequently in protest marches and demonstrations, backing this with social media feeds advocating political stances on a variety of important issues. Others, however, describe themselves as not being activists, saying that politics is not a driving object of their participation. These approaches are detailed below.

#### **VI. C. 1. Bay Area activism**

Numerous community *jaranera/os* turn out to play—often at a moment's notice, several cities away—for demonstrations protesting injustices regarding migration, child refugees, Black Lives Matter, gender rights, inhumane deportations, etc. The social media page contains news about events such as a 2014 “Hella Undocu-Run” around Lake Merritt in Oakland, where *jaranera/os* might turn out to run, to play *sones*, or both.

From the interviews emerge comments about the ease of gathering *sonera/os* for political demonstrations and protests, and about the applicability of *son jarocho* for causes involving diversity or human rights. The genre's musical forces, being flexible and multiple, enable *jaranera/os* to mount impromptu performances to support fundraisers, awareness-building events, and the like. "In *son jarocho*, everyone plays, so it is easier." A *jaranera* whose career is in communication for social awareness offers:

... It's really easy to congregate people through *son jarocho*. Also, in the context of the U.S., it has been involved with identity...immigrants, and social justice... It's a way of expressing something without threatening others. Once when the issue of militarizing the border was getting hot, I invited some people to come and create awareness of what that that would involve, and I invited *sonera/os* to come because...it would help bring attention. Later I realized that there have been a lot of uses of *son jarocho* with activism, not only here but in Mexico as well.<sup>78</sup> The flexibility of the music and lyrics for improvisation allows for it. It's the nature of ... this music's history of being critical of the system. Not just in references to the present, but...there is a history of using this music to spread things that somehow reflect the sentiment of people, what is going on in their daily lives. In some sense that involves the political as well...(Arjona chapter 5).

More subtle activist gestures have included actions such as "flash fandangos" played to alleviate the boredom of *jornaleros* waiting for work.

### **VI. C. 2. Transcending the political**

Some prominent members of the community disavow political intent. They cite lack of time or overriding focus on other matters such as preserving tradition, self-improvement, or community.

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<sup>78</sup> Examples include prominent Mexican *son jarocho* groups traveling to perform at the sites of demonstrations protesting the missing 43 students of Iguala and the slashing of funding for the University of Veracruz; *jaranera/os* here in the Bay Area have also held impromptu demonstrations in solidarity for such themes.

*Do you consider yourselves activists?*

Activists? I am not sure, but if being an activist is defending what you believe in (music, tradition) and your roots, then I think we are.

*Today, many soneros are also activists. Is this true of you? Why or why not?*

In my case, I would say no. You need conviction, and to me my mission is what I have been doing (music). I also don't have time, because of my activities as a runner.

The paradox in which apolitical Bay Area participants comingle with political ones, of course, exists in many communities. Lack of direct political activism does not necessarily signify lack of commonality with activists' goals. At times it may simply mean different choices of tactics, such as preference for the music and practices themselves as *movidas* to effect change. Recall Chela Sandoval's:

Differential consciousness is linked to whatever is not expressible through words. ... This mode of consciousness both inspires and depends on differential social movement... (138-9).

Instead of outwardly visible activism, this might manifest as Gloria Anzaldúa's

*Coatlicue* state in the borderlands, *nepantla* (or the third space), a site:

...in which those who are not recognized within the "legitimate" constructions of subjectivity—culture, nation, race, sexuality—resist immobilization... (Sheila Contreras, xvii).

In order to reach and harvest the potential of this liminal site, Sandoval, again,

recognizes a useful *movida* to be

...love as a "breaking" through whatever controls in order to find "understanding and community"... a set of practices and procedures that can transit all citizen-subjects, regardless of social class, toward a differential mode of consciousness... (138-9).

These “practices and procedures” transcend conventional activist means and ends, offering a larger, uncolonized source of potential:

...To fall in love means that... subjectivity can become freed from ideology ...political weapons of consciousness are available in a constant tumult of possibility...love...can access and guide...revolutionary maneuvers toward decolonized being ...(139-40).

This kind of love has political efficacy, even operating in sites other than city streets. The suggestion that Bay Area *jaranera/o* practices amount to love pertains, as they produce affective states with similarities to love, they redefine community in the image of those who participate, and they locate themselves in places “not subject to control or governance.” Places like these include Sandoval’s artistic *movidas*, and recall the lack of formal power structures in the *jaranera/o* community.

Of course, as with any group, there are some internal politics—jousting for gigs, for respect, for the *tarima*, for friends. There is also a subtle hierarchy of respect for whomever taught us or helped us, for whomever seems more confident or skilled. Yet this hierarchy does not derive from a system of elections or governance. People have simply “stepped up to the plate” and exerted leadership to pull events together or to teach. Perhaps it is in the nature of people in Western cultures to ascribe power and authority to those who have done so. It is also, at times, the nature of people, when they recognize power is ascribed to them, to be puzzled as to how to embody it. This dynamic is taken up further in the next two sections.

### **VI. C. 3. Transcending community politics**

“It is always this way. Those who really care about the music stay with it, and those who are not, will move on.” Francisco González, who speaks from long

experience, was telling me that those who deeply resonate with *son jarocho* and its community will weather ungrounding storms, while others will be swept away. His words recall Arjona's observation of a "community in process."

In fact, a number of *idas y vueltas* (goings and returnings) have taken place in the Bay Area over the past four years. Often, these changes are inevitable results of internal migrations for reasons of work, school or family. The enormous upheaval entailed is ameliorated by the presence of *jaranera/o* communities in multiple locations even in the U.S.

...I have been able to understand migration to the United States because my family did the internal migration. Many (Latin American migrants) went first to the bigger cities before they came here. Leaving the place of your origin, where your roots are, although you can develop other roots later, you have to leave your reputation, your community, what you do of value. Moving, even just to...the big city, you have to compete and to build again that space that you had before, your community, your reputation, your social capital...What I see with *son jarocho* is it allows you to easily belong to a community...

For newcomers to an area, *jaranera/os* may represent familiarity, and the ability to establish cultural capital. When fresh faces join the community, moreover, they bring ideas and energy:

...I am seeing more of the men doing it but they are the new people...who are connected with...other networks in Mexico or in other parts of the country. So they belong to the scene but they are kind of new in this area...now more people are interested in building community. And they are participating with these different (established) champions who are creating and maintaining the spaces...

*Son jarocho* is almost a fashion now, in certain circles, environments, scenes...It's a culture that is spreading. We are getting people that have seen this in other places that are following the trend...

At other times, when a community member (new or old) receives deserved acclaim for an accomplishment, this can lead to unintended rifts or even attrition. When afforded status that is not inherent in the way the community functions, s/he may be unclear as to whether or how to perform that privilege. Meanwhile, those that do not garner acclaim, or who are as yet unfamiliar with the norms that transcend personality cultism, may feel less secure. Specific instances are not given in order to respect privacy, but the result can be attrition. To avoid this, a delicate balance of stepping forward and stepping back, of pitching in and of encouraging others, is needed. For example, the low-key manner and hard work ethic of Maestro Posadas reap an organic respect without being overly intimidating. Again, his wife, who knows the repertoire inside and out but rarely performs, prefers to support *sonera/os* with essential *movidás* behind the scenes, encouraging them.

That said, as one interviewee noted, “sometimes it is healthy to take a pause.” Sometimes friends are absent for a number of months for personal reasons, and much missed. Then, they return. The term *idas y vueltas*—goings and returnings—fits well. For example, anyone actively involved in childrearing will sometimes be unable to participate in community events, even for an extended period. Although children are welcome, they sometimes have needs that prohibit attendance, perhaps school-related, health-related, activities-related, etc. Many people have family to visit in other cities, or work or health issues to resolve. After months of absence, their return is visibly welcomed.

Of course, sometimes, people leave permanently, due to any number of reasons. This is a characteristic of any community's dynamics. Then new participants arrive. Students arrive in the Bay Area for college, or leave for college elsewhere. Sometimes newcomers have more skills than established locals. Given the importance of lack of hierarchy to the broader efficacy of the community, the dynamic membership based in a larger, diasporic meta-community, in a multi-ethnic, multi-national genre and movement, seems to add to the community's strength. As "Ryan" noted in the section on inclusivity, the *son jarocho* tradition provides strangers with a common language.

A comment by Dr. Loco (a.k.a. Dr. Jose Cuéllar) at a recent workshop recalls that dynamic membership is a part of community identity: "This is *son jarocho* in diaspora." Again, "it is a borrowed tradition" and, as the Maestro Posadas indicates, a noble one.

#### **VI. C. 4. Commoditization and community; professionalism and practices**

A few definitions are mete. "Commoditization" here refers both to the Marxist concept of commodity fetishism, in which inanimate objects are valued beyond their intrinsic worth and then lose value through overexposure, and to the temptation toward cultural appropriation that fetishism engenders.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> "The commodity-form, and the value-relation of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy we must take flight into the misty realm of religion. There the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. I call



“Professionalism” includes technical virtuosity, competence, and performing for remuneration, and also the risk of cultural appropriation when an art form is taken out of its intended context, thus separated from important community practices.

...Artemio...does not play the *sones* in order to put on a show; he does it in order for people to participate and enjoy, to *convivir*.

This suggests that community is a value separate from professional activities involving *son jarocho*. The Maestro himself is more explicit:

*Son* is noble. It is greater than individual projects...we are just a small part of the *son*. We have everything because the *son* exists. If you want to play *son* for audiences who don't know it, that is fine. But you should go to the fandango... That is where we learn everything and give everything.

He supports professional musicians playing *son*, with the caveat that in order for them to do it well, they need to partake continuously of sources of learning and do the practices. As Maria de la Rosa says, “There is so much to learn, so much depth.”

Of course gifted *sonera/os* do take *sones* to the concert stage. They entertain the audience and spread awareness of the aesthetic beauty of the genre. However, the audience will not be able to partake of the totality of *son* including its origins in diversity, in communal participation, and in affects of transcendence such as identity construction and *communitas*. In fact, the proscenium arch often produces and reifies a hierarchy of status between the performer and audience.<sup>80</sup>

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this the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities” (Marx 165).

<sup>80</sup> I am not referring to professional musicians in the Sotavento, who have grown up with *son* and kept it alive when it was not popular, and who may have no other means of subsistence.

Bearns Esteva and Sheehy discuss in more depth the decline that overtook *son jarocho* practice during the rise of Ballet Folklórico and radio in the mid-twentieth century. Popular conceptions of the genre came to comprise three-minute, sped-up, canned and commoditized renditions of compositions that were originally conceived to last at least twenty minutes, at a danceable pace, enhanced with improvisation.

Posadas reminds us:

... in Mexico, as well as here, there are many “ballets” (Ballets Folklóricos) that are not the same thing as a *fandango*...they come out in a pre-designed scene...but what we wish to promote is ...to dance ... freely...the difference... between ballet and traditional *son* is that in the latter, everyone participates, even if you are not playing, dancing or singing. Your participation and expression is more real, more relaxed, not as plastic.

In the past few decades, through the *rescate* movement in Mexico and artist-practitioners like Posadas and Los Beltrán here, the traditional ways have returned, through another type of *idas y vueltas*. *Jaranera/o* communities have sprung up, now strong and widespread enough to transcend the dynamics of migration.

Occasionally, peoples’ professional activities come to eclipse their participation in the traditions. Meanwhile non-professionals may feel marginalized, rightly or wrongly:

... there is this kind of status that people have, either because they have training in the music or because they are professional. When I started in the community there was this thing about “come and see us perform,” but not really getting too involved with helping building the community...

However, resentments usually subside fairly quickly, because they are irrelevant:

...But when I think of *son jarocho* I think of our community here. I don’t think of the very beautiful, graceful skillful dancers and performers. I think of us, our getting together for Cassandra’s monthly workshop, or getting together for protests, or getting together for our monthly fandango, that’s what I think

of. That's what *son jarocho*'s bringing me and I think it's bringing everyone... Of course it's great to have people sharing their knowledge and traditions. But when I think about my community in the Bay Area, it's beautiful and I think, "OH WOW." That's what we are building, that's what we have, and this is a music that allows for all this difference, so we actually, many of us, relate to this expression. Right? Let's see what we can do, because it requires a lot of work. Building communities requires a lot of work. (Laughter.)

#### VI. C. 5. Tradition versus modernity

Another dialogue in the Bay Area *jaranera/o* community concerns tradeoffs between approaches to *son jarocho* that preserve tradition, and those that promote modernity. "Tradition," as used here, refers to repertoire, interpretations, customs and practices handed down through generations of practitioners. "Modernity" implies any manner of innovation that diverges from tradition, such as fusion of *son jarocho* with other styles and genres, addition of modern instruments and technologies, or acquiescence to capitalist means of production such as *jarana* factories, concert tours, awards ceremonies, or recording contracts.<sup>81</sup>

The issues resemble those of commoditization versus community, with key distinctions. The earlier dialogue involved sensitivities within the community that are not often openly discussed, while open dialogue regarding tradition and modernity takes place in many *jaranera/o* communities.

Stuyvesant Bearns Esteva, in his dissertation, documents the changes that *son jarocho* underwent in mid-century Mexico under pressures of nation-building and

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<sup>81</sup> By that logic, the expanded roles of women would be modern.

capitalism. He traces the emergence of the dialectic between “blanco” and “fandanguero” styles of playing as explained here:

...we have two very different discourses circulating about what son jarocho “is.” For a majority of people in Mexico and the US, what has been disrespectfully termed by some as “son jarocho marisquero” (literally ‘of seafood restaurants,’ alluding to the fact that this is a common place to see this style of music played) remains the undeniable representation of this form of music. From ballets folklóricos to the state-sponsored group Tlen-Huicani ...this form of the music is what a majority of people will encounter...a form of cultural expressivity that is to be watched...

The other conceptualization of this cultural form seeks the opposite trajectory... a participatory form of cultural expressivity...

...I use the term son jarocho blanco (white son jarocho) as opposed to the disrespectful terms marisquero or charolero...“blanco” rests upon the... preference of musicians (who play) this style...to dress in white...

Conversely, and borrowing the expression from Martha Gonzales, I use the term son jarocho fandanguero (fandango-style son jarocho)... (79).

Francisco González is artistically a traditionalist, but understands those for whom access to resources through professionalism represents survival, progress and empowerment. Thus he defends the “blanco” style musicians in Mexico, while cautioning U.S. *jaranera/os* not to let Western-style success become a goal out of context of greater priorities. Similarly, Olga Naguera Ramírez, Russell Rodríguez and Anita González view Ballet Folklórico-style concertizing as means for introducing larger populations to Mexican folk music—which could lead to their eventual participation in community music. César Castro comes from Veracruz, and functions in Los Angeles as a teacher of *son jarocho* in the traditional manner, while also performing professionally as the head of the *jarocho* group Cambalache. He has hosted, through his regular podcasts, a widely joined debate about the relative merits

of traditionalism and modernity. Back in the Bay Area, Maestro Posadas and others tend to prefer tradition:

... We have everything because the *son* exists. If you want to play *son* for audiences who don't know it, that is fine.<sup>82</sup> But you should go to the fandango...that is where we learn everything and give everything...

and:

It's important for people to remember that *son jarocho* is an ancient tradition that we have borrowed here in the Bay Area. It doesn't belong to us so we must remember to respect it. It is a *borrowed* tradition...

and:

I think that we do a service to the community because we are keeping the traditions alive and transmit what we are learning to others, especially to younger generations.

Some theorists mistrust the concept of tradition, likening it to sentimentality for a past long gone, or to escapism from the here and now, or even to fantasy or political maneuvering.<sup>83</sup> Ironically, such ideas apply to *son jarocho* when performed non-traditionally. For example, during the mid-twentieth-century when Mexico was invested in building national identity and nationalism, the government supported the development of Ballet Folklórico, which presents gorgeous yet non-traditionally idealized or romanticized versions of *son jarocho* and other genres. The interpretive liberties in these presentations signaled modernity rather than tradition.

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<sup>82</sup> At another time, Posadas commented that he does not care for a number of the fusion projects, involving *son jarocho* with other genres, that have sprung up recently; that they don't really add to a genre that has noble roots and infinite potential for variety through improvisation.

<sup>83</sup> In the 1983 book *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by E.J. Hobsbawm and T.O. Ranger, the editors find that some traditions that claim to be old are often recent in origin, even invented. An example is the modern development of nations and nationalism, in which a national identity is created to promote national unity, as Benedict Andersen argued in his "Imagined Communities." Hobsbawm is not only signifying invention, but showing how traditions are defied and rationalized to maximize political and social value.

Today, projects in the Bay Area and elsewhere fuse *son jarocho* with reggae, Cuban son, cumbia or rock-and-roll. Many regard these projects as progressive, or as means to recuperate and celebrate lost roots of the genre.<sup>84</sup> The creators identify the benefits of generating a larger awareness of *son jarocho*. However, others express concern that creative fusions risk dilution of the artistic integrity of the genre, or misrepresenting it to new audiences, or demeaning it through capitalist attempts to generate revenues—in other words, cultural appropriation.

Maestro Posadas suggests the genre's traditional aesthetic foundations and artistic potential are ample, and hints that what it needs to attract new practitioners is community effort:

We need to spread *son* through everyone, to every locality. The field (the potential for practice and spread of *son*) is so big! It's not necessary to be a professional musician... Take it seriously. Preserve it and pass it on. Go to fandangos. You can start fandangos.

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<sup>84</sup> Similar projects are taking place in Veracruz, as well.

## **VI. D. Transc – End**

### **VI. D. 1. Chapter summary**

Ethics of transcendence on the ground of the Bay Area *son jarocho* community round bases of inclusivity, feminization, and activism as they mark paths to transcendent experiences. Dialogues along the way unearth topics ranging from cultural appropriation to appropriate humanitarianism, while touching base time and again with tradition and transcendence. The recursivity of these themes recalls the way *ariles y más ariles* recur time and again in “El Balajú,” which, like other *sones*, grounds the circuitry of time in favor of eternal, non-hierarchical periodicities that dissolve inter- and intra-personal boundaries. In the Bay Area, *sones* and love function as *movidas* to break through to liminal, decolonizing Coatlicue states of limitless possibilities.

### **VI. D. 2. Conclusion**

Several questions began this study:

-What are the relationships between practice of *son jarocho* and endurance?

Some concrete ones, such as affinities for activities that build physical stamina and/or produce entrained states enabling sustained effort, emerged (see chapters 4 and 5.)

-Do only those with above-average activity levels enjoy the genre? This may be true, yet some participants may appear to be doing relatively little in the way of external activity, in particular those whose contributions are primarily holding space and bearing witness; however appearances can be deceiving (see chapters 5 and 6.)

-Are the catharsis, the medicine, the peak experiences attributable to the music, or to the surrounding practices? The answers are as many and varied as the participants' experiences. However, theory, praxis, and even science suggest that both musical and non-musical practices can invoke transcendent affects (see chapter 4, and parts of 5 and 6.)

-Is *son jarocho* separable from its ritual manifestations, or does it become something else in isolation? Here again, opinions vary, but connections to traditional community practices seem to inform many kinds of transcendent affects—and are considered essential by some of the most dedicated community leaders in the Bay Area (see chapter 5.)

-What is there in this centuries-old art form that has enabled it to rise again in the post-modern world to its level of popularity? Some of its attributes give clues. For example, its traditional nature provides a common language in an increasingly diverse and diasporic world (chapter 6.) Its formation within a diverse, diasporic and oppressive colonial situation (chapter 3) imbued it with subversive strategies of transcendence like coded commentaries on the weaknesses of the hegemony and the strengths of people of color; the genre's improvisational practices lend it an ever-new, timeless appeal (chapter 4.) Moreover, *son jarocho*'s participative format provides for ease of mobilization when crises requiring political or humanitarian activism arise that could benefit from the support of non-violent artistic *movidas* (see chapters 5, 6.)

Throughout this study, transcendence has echoed in each chapter, in each section. It has performed *idas y vueltas*, reappearing over and again, like *ariles*, in



fandangos such as the one described in the introduction. The literature review transcended the obligatory encyclopaedia of sources, by using them to unpack and defuse key concepts such as ritual and magic.

As detailed in chapter 3, transcendence of ethnic, cultural and language barriers enabled *son jarocho* to be synthesized among three disparate groups of people navigating the ravages of colonialism. Practices of each group, which enabled transcendence of suboptimal material conditions, functioned in parallel with practices in the other groups. Mesoamerican *mitotes*, Yoruba rituals, Voodoo rites, Andalusian saraos, Sufi zikrs, Catholic festivals, and more contributed to the affective power of what came to be fandangos. Transcendent phenomena seem to thrive on the practice of ritual techniques shared and honed over centuries to produce maximal efficacy—in other words, tradition.

The *jaranera/o* community that has developed in the Bay Area transcends centuries and borders as it practices *son jarocho*. Its Maestro has imbued it with ethics transcending Western epistemologies, grounded humbly and nobly in community and tradition. Other participants exert transcendent amounts of dedication to keep in it motion. The demographics of the community transcend stereotypical notions of who might wish to participate.

Inclusivity as a general value has enabled establishment of individual and group identities that transcend mundane limitations. It extends to embracing genres of *son* that are not *jarocho*, genres of art that are not *son*, gender role models that

transcend stereotypes, ability levels and projects that range from neophyte to professional, and, of course, a variety of ethnicities.

A number of women transcend outdated gender roles, as they come to lead performing groups, organize major events, and give workshops. Others, however, recall intersectional feminization ethics that advocate for transcendence of white capitalist feminist agendas in favor of differential *movidas* that transcend all colonizing structures of discourse and authority. As a *movida*, embracing “feminine” arts transcends barriers to musical performance, by providing the occasions in a non-threatening way; it also works powerfully to enable traditional occasions and their transcendent benefits to thrive. Chicana feminist theorists have prescribed strategies that range from invoking archetypes in third spaces, to proactively cultivating love through disengaging preconceived notions, to using non-verbal and artistic forms of communication, to performing postcolonial imaginaries into being. Strategies like these appear in various sites of the Bay Area community.

In regard to politics and activism, Bay Area participants generally transcend ephemeral interpersonal politics to embrace lasting solidarity. Many also support political activism and/or humanitarian appeals with *son jarocho* performances. Even those whose abiding *movida* is the fandango ritual may embody the activism of performing postcolonial imaginaries and transmitting love; in so-doing, they transform disruptions within the community into love or transcendent states. Both in the Bay Area and beyond, *jaranera/os* routinely debate ethics of artistic traditionalism versus modernism. Also discussed are ethical concerns of cultural appropriation

stemming from aspects of professionalism versus the ability of professional performing to provide humanitarian outreach. Thus, participants actively engage in deriving ethical balances.

*Son jarocho* practice has transcended time, space and cultures, yet still remains capable of producing transcendent art, states, and actions among Bay Area practitioners. Their words reiterate these benefits and offer a fitting conclusion to this study:

“It’s the beauty.”

“Once I am there, my energy comes back. It’s my medicine.”

“I just feel good when I am here.”

“When I’m tired I know I can just put one foot in front of the other.”

“I knew I wanted to keep doing it.”

“It was more important to me than school or career.”

“We have everything because the *son* exists.”

“I find I can do things I didn’t know I could do.”

“I realized I am not going to be on this earth forever, so I needed to do this.”

“We are keeping the traditions alive and transmit what we are learning to others, especially to younger generations.”

“We have everything because we have the *son*. *El son es noble*.”

## **Epilogue.**

Some topics that would be interesting to research further include antecedents of specific *sones* within Iberian and North African repertoires, and deeper study of the genealogy of *zapateado jarocho*. In addition, inquiry into the intersections between *son jarocho* and other community music traditions that are gaining popularity would be interesting, as would more analysis of regional differences in *son jarocho* practice. Even in the Bay Area, the scene has grown to the point that since this writing began, local sub-groups have begun to differentiate by demographics, concerns and customs. New materialist feminist theory on shaping the future by performing the past might have predicted this.

Also, since this document was first filed, Maestro Artemio Posadas, to whom some of the greatest uniqueness of the Bay Area community is due, was awarded the National Endowment for the Arts' highest honor in Folk and Traditional Arts: that of National Heritage Fellow for 2016, and the Bess Lomax-Hawes award. In line with the value system that Maestro has taught, then, I submit that the most informative and beneficial next steps of all would be to play more *sones* and attend more fandangos. They would certainly be the most appealing and the most transcendent.

## Appendix 1. Glossary

**Affect:** as a noun, is “the conscious subjective aspect of an emotion...(and) observable manifestations of a subjectively experienced emotion” ([www.Merriam-Webster.com](http://www.Merriam-Webster.com)). As used here, it expands to accommodate “mental state” and “subjective experience” within “emotion.” This is as opposed to “effect” which encompasses both subjective and objective phenomena. As verbs, “affect” is to “effect” as “influence” is to “achieve.”

**Bay Area (*La Bahía*):** the area surrounding San Francisco Bay, extending from Santa Cruz, Watsonville and San Jose at the south, through Fremont, Hayward, Oakland, Berkeley to the east; Richmond, San Pablo and Marin County to the north, San Francisco and the Peninsula, particularly Redwood City, to the west.

**Chicana/o:** refers to people with Mexican heritage who grew up and/or identify as people of the United States.

***Coatlicue* state:** a term coined by Gloria Anzaldúa that I use for a condition that permits the synthesis of multiple identities (according to society’s definitions) thus affording greater potential mobility and wholeness. Coatlicue is an ancient Mesoamerican goddess with the great power to give and take life.

***Communitas*:** a sense of community in which people have equal status and shared experiences, or the spirit of community. In Victor Turner’s ritual theory, this may be an objective of ritual practices.

***Convivencia*:** Spanish term for living together, coexisting; in the vernacular here, hanging out together and sharing experiences.

***Espiga*:** long, narrow, curved piece of horn (or surrogate material) used as plectrum for plucked *jarocho* chordophones such as the *requinto* and *leona*.

**Fandango:** In *son jarocho* tradition, refers to a ritual occasion at which participants eat, play, dance, and offer verses, that developed in the Veracruz countryside at least as early as the eighteenth century. Fandangos might last a few hours, all night, or several days. The term is also used to refer to a stylized dance.

***Guitarra de son, Requinto*:** 4-stringed melody instrument, plucked with *espiga*.

***Huapango*:** Another term used for **fandango**-like occasions throughout Veracruz. Refers to *jarocho* fandangos and also to Huastecan dance and music occasions that also involve dance on *tarimas*. Origin is suspected to refer to dancing on wood. Sometimes spelled ***guapango***.

**Idas y vueltas:** Goings and comings, or better, goings and returns. Sometimes refers to dance movements that move one direction, then turn back, as in the *son* “El Palomo.” Sometimes refers to intercultural travel back and forth, as between Spain and Mexico. Serves as metaphors for other concepts, such as “waverings.”

**Jarana:** In *jarocho* context, a small, wooden strummed lute with trough construction and five courses of six or more strings, upon which *son jarocho* is played. Sizes range from the smallest *mosquito*, *primera*, *segunda*, to the largest *tercera*. There are sizes between these as well, and various tunings and string allocations. (The *jarana huasteca*, as opposed to the *jarana jarocho*, has a different configuration and construction.) “*Jarana*” is used elsewhere to refer to parties and a variety of dance.

**Jaranera/o:** Originally, one who plays a *jarana* or who parties; more recently, one who attends *son jarocho* fandangos and events. Somewhat interchangeable with *sonera/o*, *fandanguera/o*.

**Jarocho:** Term used to refer to ranching aspects of the Sotavento countryside of Veracruz, and to its inhabitants. *Jarocho* people may include various mixtures of African, Mesoamerican and European heritage, especially the former two; stereotypes of their character include hospitality, humor, high spirits and good nature. The origin of the term has been disputed and may once have been disrespectful.

**Liminal state:** Technically, a threshold or edge between two sites. See *nepantla*.

**Maestra/o:** generically, teacher; as a title, a sign of respect for mastery.

**Movida:** Means, mode, movement. Upheaval, thrust, commotion.

**Mudanza:** Type of silent, or relatively quiet, step done when singers are singing. Often more visibly showy than the *zapateado* segments that are performed between sung verses.

**Nepantla:** Mesoamerican concept referring to spaces between two or more systems of culture, gender, etc. from which one is able to see from more than one perspective at once. According to Anzaldúa: “Bridges span liminal spaces between worlds, spaces I call *nepantla*, a Nahuatl word meaning *tierra entre medio*. Transformations occur in this in-between space, an unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition space lacking clear boundaries. *Nepantla es tierra desconocida* (unknown territory) and living in this liminal zone means being in a constant state of displacement--an uncomfortable, even alarming feeling. Most of us dwell in *nepantla* so much of the time it’s become a sort of “home.” Though this state links us to other ideas, people, and worlds, we feel threatened by these new connections and the change they

engender...I use the concept of *nepantla* to describe the state or stage between the identity that's in place and the identity in progress but not yet formed" (Keating, 177).

**Performativity:** the capacity of speech, communication and acts to construct and perform identity and social imaginaries.

**Requinto:** small plucked lute that carries melody line of *son jarocho*. Wooden construction, guitar shape, usually four strings. Also *guitarra de son*.

**Rescate:** term for movement out of Veracruz to resuscitate the *son jarocho* genre, begun in the late 1980's-early 1990's.

**Scene:** term used in sociological scholarship to refer to a community formed around artistic or musical practices. According to Will Straw (1991) in Bennet (2004), a scene is "that cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization."

**Son:** Composition from within a group of regional Mexican artistic genres that combine music, dance and poetry. *Son* elsewhere is used to mean "sound."

**Son de Bahía:** Bay Area *jaranera/o* community, web page; "son of the Bay."

**Sonera/o:** Performer of *son*, practitioner of *son*. In *jarocho* contexts, somewhat interchangeable with *jaranera/o*.

**Son jarocho:** Variety of Mexican *son* originating in the Sotavento region of Veracruz, comprising a canon of over 100 compositions, often featuring polyrhythm, traditionally performed by large groups of *jaranas* and other stringed instruments surrounding alternating pairs of dancers who provide the percussion line on *tarimas* with loud footwork. Singers offer verses that are either traditional or improvised, in aleatoric order.

**Sotavento:** Region of Veracruz generally to the south and east of the port of Veracruz (literally "downwind") in which *jarocho* culture developed and flourishes. Its climate is tropical and topography varies from flatter coastal plains, marshes and river basins to higher more temperate hills and lakes. The Tuxtla region is hilly and known for magical folklore and greater use of violins; areas nearer the coast, like Alvarado, are flatter. Some *jarocho* culture extends into Oaxaca and Chiapas at adjacent borders, and north of the port to the state capital, Xalapa. See Map 1.

**Tarima:** wooden platform upon which the dances steps of *zapateado* resound. In *son jarocho*, the platform is often less than a foot high, and has resonating holes bored in its sides.

**Third space:** In discourse of dissent, the Third Space has come to have interpretations as either a space where the oppressed plot their liberation or a space where oppressed and oppressor are able to come together, free of oppression itself, embodied in their particularity.

**Transcendence:** from Webster, exceeding usual limits; extending or lying beyond the limits of ordinary experience; or, as in Kantian philosophy, being beyond the limits of all possible experience and knowledge.

**Zapateado, zapateo:** Dancing with shoes, that produces a rhythmic line. In *son jarocho*, the shoes often have hard heels that produce fine resonance on the *tarima*.



## Appendix 2: Translation of texts by Rolando Pérez Fernández

The reasons I translate this much of Pérez Fernández' work are:

- English-speaking scholars and aficionados of *son jarocho* will benefit from access to the material, which is little known outside Mexico.
- It demonstrates and substantiates the points and procedures I use to identify African rhythms within *son jarocho*.
- It provides credit and exposure to the original author for developing and thoroughly explaining his intricate procedure.
- It avoids long sections of paraphrase that support my point, but are not original, within the main document.

### Part 1: Pérez Fernández, Rolando A. *La Música Afromestiza Mexicana*.

Universidad Veracruzana, 1990.

In African music and the music of direct African descent in Cuba, Haiti and Trinidad, the difficulty of maintaining an internal metronomic sense while playing divisive and additive rhythms in phrases of different length, determines that the basic pulse is sounded by clapping or beating some idiophone, particularly the African cowbell (*cencerro*). From this procedure comes a conducting line linked to the time span that is called timeline (Nketia 1975: 131). Timelines can be rhythmic patterns, or may consist of a regular succession of strokes that mark the basic beat or, in certain cases, the beginning of a time span.

Because of their close rhythmic links with song, timelines often reflect, by way of archetypes, the basic rhythmic elements of melodic patterns.

Their rhythms are authentic examples of what Nketia called abstract rhythmic patterns. Here are some of the ternary timelines of African music...:

(d=eighth note; 7=eighth rest; for simplicity quarters are transcribed as "d 7")

Sesquialteros:

d d 7 d 7 d d 7 d 7 d 7  
x x . x . x x . x . x .

d 7 d d 7 d d 7 d 7 d 7  
x . x x . x x . x . x .

Additives:

d 7 d 7 d 7 7 d 7 d 7 7  
x . x . x . . x . x . .

d 7 d 7 d d 7 d 7 d 7 d 7  
x . x . x x . x . x . x . (76).

The phrase, according to the theory of Vega

Vega's study of hundreds of old folk songs he collected within Argentina, Chile, Peru and Bolivia, caused him to note that the phrases of this music reduce to a small number of formulas. Later, when considering the works of great composers of the Classical and Romantic periods, he found the same formulas. In examples from post-Renaissance Western European art music Vega bases his theory of the phrase. For this musicologist, the phrase is the minimum unit of musical thought equal to the motive of traditional theory, and the phrase first defines itself rhythmically. The Argentine musicologist believes that the perfect phrase is divided into two halves, each of which is made up of a measure, if by that we mean, following the conventional definition, the space between two bar lines. However, bar lines are used by Vega, not simply to indicate the status of the note that follows them, but to point out what he has called points of comprehension located at the start of the two bars, the first of which point he called "capital" and the second, "caudal"...

The first bar contains a formula of conflict and the second contains one of rest, and "this usually happens in practice- the last beats of each phrase, in the second group ... contract into equivalent larger values, effecting conclusive repose" (Vega 1941: 46).

Vega's *puntos grávidos* or comprehension points present a remarkable analogy with Nketia's regulatory pulses, linked to bodily dance moves - and in particular dance's isochronism-thus, recall that the regularity characterizing the European phrase in the modern era, from the seventeenth century, when rhythmic squareness entered, became an element that was useful to dancers, clearly marking their steps. This was the result of the dance frenzy that gripped European courts from the second half of the century when the professional musicians from the villages came composing dances based on folk melodies and rhythms...

We can affirm, moreover, that the structure of the phrase and its formula of conflict-repose, according to Vega's studies, is not far from African music. The first rhythmic pattern that appears in the notebook of exercises of African rhythm by Nketia (1963a:4) is the following, in binary (Fig. 17).

d d d d \ q q (where d=eighth and q=quarter note).

In ternary (1963a:6) appears this other format:

d d d d d \ q q q

The formula of conflict-repose exemplified here is present as much in songs of Ghana from the notebook, as it is in the exercises...(77-83).

In old Spanish romances a rhythmic sesquialtera appears that survives in many musics of the Americas, including Cuban *guajira* (country) tunes where this formula became almost a cliché among many Cuban composers when writing *zapateos*, *guajiras*, *villancicos*, etc. The aforementioned rhythm pattern has been rightly included among the three basic formulas in which the sesquialtera appears in Spanish music (Ramon and Rivera 1954: 27). But the fact is that this formula, with an insignificant difference, is also common in African melodies. Exercises 50 and 60 of Nketia's notebook (1963b: 22)...are designed to familiarize the reader with this rhythm pattern that is also used as a timeline in Africa (Ghana, specifically), as we have shown...In Cuba the descendants of *arará dajomé* slaves of Jovellanos, Matanzas province, Little Africa, still perform it on the *ogán* or cowbell in their rituals. Below is the timeline of African origin (Fig. 21a) above the Spanish sesquialtera formula (Fig. 21b). The latter presents eight figures that correspond to classic Hispanic octosyllabic verse. The timeline, however, presents seven figures that match the number of strokes in the basic ternary patterns when they are composed of quarters and eighths (Nketia, 1963a:85).

Figure 21 (where d=eighth and 7=eighth rest; for simplicity this translator has notated quarters as "d 7", which preserves the strokes in place):

- a) 7 7/d 7 d d 7 d / d 7 d 7 d 7 / d 7 d d 7 d / d 7 d 7 7 7 //
- b) d d/d 7 d d 7 d / d 7 d 7 d d / d 7 d d 7 d / d 7 d 7 7 7 //

As concrete examples of what we have explained, below we show a fifteenth century Spanish *cantarillo* (Fig. 22a) collected by Francisco Salina in his *De Musica Libri Septem*, printed in 1577 (Torner 1938: 7), and the concluding sentences of the "tonada Guacanayara" of Cuba, in transcription superimposed above the characteristic claves of the *punto guajiro* (a rustic genre).

Figure 22

- a)
 

3/4	d \ 3/8	d 7 d \ d 7 d \ 3/4	d 7 d 7 d d \ 3/8	d 7 d \ d 7 d \ d 7
	Ro-sa	fres-ca con a-	mo- res,	ro-sa fres-ca con a-mor,
- b)claves
 

6/8;3/4	d d \	d 7 d \ d 7 d \	d 7 d 7 d(d) \	d 7 d	d 7 d \ d 7 ...
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In certain regions such as the province of Cienfuegos, where the *punto clave* is cultivated... a variant of this enters in, a resource of rhythmic variation or elaboration that is distinctly African... Here is the rhythmic pattern of the clave (Fig 23a) and that of the song (Fig. 23b).

Figure 23 (where underlining indicates ties or phrase marks)

- a) 7 7 \ d 7 d d 7 d \ 7 d 7 d 7 d \ d 7 d d 7 d \ d 7 d 7 7 7 \ \
- b) dd \ d 7 d d 7 d \ d 7 d 7 dd \ d 7 d d 7 d \ d 7 d 7 7 7 \ \

In the province of Sancti Spiritus...the *antispasto* pattern, extremely common in African music, appears. See this clave rhythm (Fig. 24b)...Above the clave rhythms we have placed exercise no. 61 from *Preparatory Exercises in African Rhythm* by K. Nketia (1963b: 23) in which the same pattern is observed corresponding to clave *espirituana* (Fig. 24a)...

- a) 6/8            d d 7 d 7 d \ 7 7 d 7 d 7 \ d d 7 d 7 d \ 7 7 d 7 d 7 \  
 b) clave        d d 7 d 7 d \ 7 7 d 7 d 7 \ d d 7 d 7 d \ 7 7 d 7 d 7 \  
 6/8; 3/4 clave...

...What we have called "African resources of rhythmic variation" consists of modifications of the pattern constituted by the succession of three quarter notes in ternary rhythm, already isolated as such by Kwabena Nketia (1963b: 5). The modifications to which we refer primarily affect the first of these three quarters, then the second one, through subdivision, merging or suppression of some of their values (Fig. 25). In some cases the changes also affect the third quarter note.

Figure 25 (where q = quarter note; z = quarter rest; d = eighth note; 7=8<sup>th</sup> rest)

- a)     q     q     q  
 b)     z     q     q  
 c)     dd    q     q  
 d)     7d    q     q

These resources of variation are used as much in general sesquialterae and divisive rhythmic patterns, as in additive patterns. In sesquialtera patterns the third quarter remains as such (fig. 26), while in additive patterns, it becomes a dotted quarter if we write the measure in 12/8 (Fig. 27), or is tied to an eighth across the bar line, if we notate it in 6/8.

In the case of patterns that begin off beat, the initial silence can be tied with the last stroke of the prior measure, producing syncopation. Nevertheless, the rhythmic effect is the same.

Figure 26

- a)     q     q     q     q.  
 b)     z     q     q     q.  
 c)     dd    q     q     q.  
 d)     7d    q     q     q.

Figure 27

- a)     q     q     q.  
 b)     7     q     q.  
 c)     dd    q     q.  
 d)     7d    q     q.

The systematic use of these resources of variation becomes evident as we collect and classify the traditional bell patterns and claves of Cuban music, i.e. from the timelines employed in Cuba, and we realize that also the same patterns are employed equally in music produced with other instruments—like drums—as much in Cuban music as in African. These resources of variation constitute a very important import from African music to Latin American music, as much in their original ternary forms as in the binarized and semi-binarized versions that we have to consider...

In the table of Figure 28 these patterns can be seen distributed into six groups. Those included in the first and second groups present forms e and f, in which there is a modification that not only affects the first beat, but also the second. Groups 3 and 4 are constituted by ambiguous rhythmic patterns. In these, the subdivision of the second beat makes it so that the accentuation or grouping of the beats determine the metric structure, such that it is easy to change this structure—say that from  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $\frac{6}{8}$ .

As far as we know, each of the forms that appears in this table occurs in African musical practice and is fully documented, except 6b and 6d. Still, we included them here because they complete the table of possible forms, even though we haven't yet proved their actual use. In Figure 29 you see a song from Ghana (Nketia 1963a:59) in which all the forms of the first group appear, except 1a and 5a. You will see that 1f appears forming part of the standard pattern, called such for its great diffusion throughout Africa and for being characteristic of the music of that continent. Its structure is that known as  $(2+2+3)+(2+3)$ , the first beats of which are noted... In the fragment that follows (Figure 30), belonging to the Akán culture, you can see form 6a... (Reader, please refer to the source documents for Figures 29 and 30.)

Figure 28

		<u>1</u>			<u>2</u>	
a)	q	q	q	q	q	dd
b)	z	q	q	z	q	dd
c)	dd	q	q	dd	q	dd
d)	7d	q	q	dd	q	dd
e)	Half		q	Half		dd
f)	z	z	q	z	z	dd
		3			4	
a)	q	dd	q	q	dd	dd
b)	z	dd	q	z	dd	dd
c)	dd	dd	q	dd	dd	dd
d)	7d	dd	q	7d	dd	dd
		5			6	
a)	q	Half		q	q.	d
b)	z	Half		7d	dd	dd
c)	dd	Half		dd	q.	d
d)	7d	Half		7d	q.	d

Below we offer another Akán example in which the basic form of the second group appears, as well as its variant 2c...(77-91).

Figure 31

(I give only the rhythm without the pitches.)

6/8 d \ q q dd \ d q q d dd q dd \ q q

In the next example, the presence of variant 4c can be seen in the last measure of the first phrase, and form 3b in the corresponding measure of the second phrase, in a fragment (Figure 32) belonging to the Fon culture (Nketia 1975:150-151). (Please see source document) (92).

**Part 2. From Pérez Fernández, Rolando A. “El son jarocho como expresión musical afromestiza.”** *Musical Cultures of Latin America: Global Effects, Past and Present*, edited by Steven Loza, Department of Ethnomusicology and Systematic Musicology, University of California, 2003, pp. 39-56.

...We believe that African rhythmic traits exist in Mexican mestizo music, as listed below:

1. The presence of numerous rhythmic patterns and metrical schemes, both divisive and additive among which stands out, as a diagnostic marker... the so-called standard pattern.
2. The use of different schemes of ternary subdivision ... that overlap one another ... and create the effect called cross rhythm...
3. The displacement of rhythm patterns with respect to a desired time interval or cycle, an effect studied extensively by David Locke (1982), and Kwabena Nketia (1974), called polyrhythms ... To the best of our knowledge, the trait appears in Mexico exclusively in *son jarocho*.
4. An integrated type of phrase of certain rhythmic patterns characterized by the non-coincidence of the axial point...(pivot point) and the starting point...(Kubik 1988: 92-93). This produces a peculiar off beat...
5. The extensive use of what we have identified as African resources of rhythmic variation in ternary...(see above)

6. The simultaneous use of binary and ternary subdivision; resulting, in some cases, in partial binarization of certain ternary rhythms...
7. Performing improvisational variations...On the other hand, specifics of execution, such as percussive strumming and diversity of forms of attack and articulation in chordophone strumming with the consequent variety of timbres and volumes...
8. Call-and-response structure...
9. The use of certain musical instruments...and percussive ways of playing some stringed instruments, such as clapping the sound box or hitting the strings...
10. ...Genres of African origin...as well as names of dances, both now and in the course of history, registered in documents.

It is the frequent construction of phrases from the second beat of the measure which confers the status of “headless phrases” in the terminology used by Carlos Vega (1941)...unlike most common in the music of European origin where phrases begin on the thesis or anacrusis. It is possible to trace the place of origin of this trait in certain regions of Africa. Cf. the Example 1, taken from Kubik (1988: 93). The same author shows us how this feature appears in the timelines of Bantú populations and cultures of East Angola, such as the Chokwe and Ngangela, who in the past were introduced into Mexico under the general designation of *benguela* and *matamba* slaves, respectively...These time lines are also typical of the music of ethnic groups speaking *kwa* languages, that populate the Gulf region of Guinea, for example, the Yoruba and Fon - known in New Spain as *locumi* and *arára*, respectively...

Kubik (1988: 92-3) explains that what he calls the axial point of a rhythm pattern falls on the first beat of it, while the so-called initial point indicates the point where the performer usually makes their first stroke on the bell, drum, etc. According to the Austrian researcher, the axial point rarely coincides with the initial point. In the following figure, the respective positions of the two can be clearly seen.

As shown, the pattern corresponding to Nigeria and Togo is called standard pattern (seven-stroke standard pattern). Locke (1982: 225) notes that in southern Ewe music this pattern can be started in several ways, though it most often begins, as we have indicated, on the second stroke of the pattern.

(Where d=8<sup>th</sup> note stroke and 7=8<sup>th</sup> rest)

W Nigerian, Togo, etc. standard pattern	d 7 d 7 d d 7 d 7 d 7 d	x . x . x x . x . x . x
E Angolan	d 7 d 7 d 7 d d 7 d 7 d	x . x . x . x x . x . x
Axial=*; Initial = ^	* ^	* ^
Greater pulsation	d 7 7 d 7 7 d 7 7 d 7 7	x . . x . . x . . x . .

(41-51).

Returning to *son jarocho*, we can see that an ancient son entitled “El Coco” presents the kind of phrasing described, indicated by a tie in the *requinto* part, and also when the *pregonero* (vocal lead) enters verses on the second beat of the standard pattern... The verses of the chorus enter similarly. The *pregonero* answers with a 6-syllable phrase, which completes the octosyllabic meter of this son. (This kind of responsorial alternation also highlights the strong African history of this piece.) Here the classic Hispanic octosyllabic verse conforms excellently to the African rhythm pattern, which, as we know, consists of five basic temporal durations. The paroxytone verses, with their full eight syllables, take two different forms, depending on the point where the phrase ends, ie, whether or not the first beat of the next measure is played. The same applies to the oxitonic verses, of only seven real syllables (Ex. 3). In each of these cases one of the resources of African rhythmic variation (Ex. 4) is used... In contrast, the *jarana* uses rhythmic patterns included in groups 1, 2, 3 and 4, but within them only a) and c) variants, if they involve the attack on the first beat. (These groups are depicted on p. 46 in Loza.) This confirms the predominantly metric-harmonic function of this instrument in the *jarocho* group, as the *jarana* must clearly define the *compás* (equivalent here to the time span), especially the start thereof; and must also "fill" it by continuously sounding harmony with chords that embody patterns of greater rhythmic density. With regard to the use of such resources of rhythmic variation, the *requinto* occupies an intermediate position between the *jarana* and the singing. Closely linked to the melodic line and vocal rhythm with which it is often intertwined in a relationship that oscillates between polyphony and heterophony (though gravitating more toward the latter), the *requinto* uses herein the a) and c) variants and variant d), rarely using variant b), where the attack occurs farther from the axial point, leaving, therefore, a more perceptible rhythmic void.

Instead, it uses the a) and c) variants in groups 1,2,3,4 and even in the 5th, which involves merging into one of the second and third time values of the rhythm pattern and therefore less rhythmic density. This fusion is associated with a change of phrasing, indicated with the corresponding ligation, which also implies a change in the melodic curve direction (downward in the first case and ascending in the second). In the type of phrase described first, the apex - and in general the highest notes - are usually located at the beginning of the phrase, on the second pulse and at the initial point, while in the second type of phrase the culminating point is almost always found toward the middle, on the first beat and coinciding with the axial point. This type of phrase is that which most often marks the standard pattern in various genres of Latin-American music, and can be said to represent a solution closer to European models.

This version of "El Coco" highlights the peculiarities of *jarana* execution that relate to the African propensity to vary not only rhythmic values, but also the timbre of resources used, as well as the relative heights (Nketia 1974: 137 -138). By paying attention to the *jarana tresera* transcription, one sees the wealth of possibilities achieved through the combined use of rhythmic elaboration, the different arrangement of accents within the *compás* and the various modes of attack and



articulation. Here we see the dry, percussive strum called *azote* (whip), which strongly mutes the vibration of the strings, similar to a beat *tapado* (covered) on a drum. But at the same time we find the so-called *abanico* or *floreo* (execution of gently arpeggiated chords), the *redobles* (rolls or tremolos), or the string allowed to vibrate freely, as an open beat on an African membranophone.

...On the trail of African rhythmic traits detectable in *son jarocho*, we remember that the first effect resulting from the multi-line organization in African instrumental music is called *contrarritmo* (cross-rhythm), which is produced by overlapping, within the same time span, different metrical schemes. The second effect is, however, what Nketia has called polyrhythm, resulting from a different location of a rhythmic pattern on a timeline, beat on an idiophone or clapped, which he calls "spacing" (1975: 134-7), ie, the result of the displacement of that rhythmic pattern in relation to a specific reference point. A pattern can thus start at different positions of a measure...

For his part, David Locke, who has thoroughly studied the drumming for dance among the southern Ewe in Ghana... points out that there are, for example, four positions for a series of three half notes within the time interval corresponding to a standard pattern of the bell (... known in Cuba as *bembé clave*), consisting of 12 elementary pulses and 7 strokes ... This... we find also in the *son jarocho*, specifically in the *quijada* part. Occasionally it appears in the strumming of the *jarana* and more frequently in the improvisations called *tanguéo*, an important section by the *requinto*. It is noteworthy that in *jarocho* music such counter-rhythms identify with the term counterpoint. A ... version of the "La Morena" performed by Don Andres Vega and his son Tereso on two requintos may well illustrate the use, in *son jarocho*, of African metric displacement (example transcribed)... Let us make here a brief analysis... (A very technical paragraph is omitted. However, the end of the discussion is appended as it alludes to a procedure of figuration characteristic of African genres such as *jelis'* .)

In the second instrumental interlude we see the same motive displaced, but in addition an analogous movement in *requinto* II as it runs a rhythm pattern of eighth-eighth-quarter-eighth-eighth, integrated by six quarters within the measure, and corresponding to a metric scheme moving in three elementary pulses. *Requinto* I simultaneously adheres to the basic orthodox pulsations, ie, the four dotted quarters within 12/8, in a kind of short ostinato that reflects procedures of African instrumental polyphony. Finally, in the postlude ... *requinto* I introduces a new melodic-rhythmic motif displaced in three eighths (i.e. three eighths earlier than the motif previously appeared), but fails to complete the total number of 12 elementary pulsations characteristic of the cycle, giving way to the arpeggiated motive based on the dominant, which, is now presented ascending (9-12 mm). The repetitions of this inverted motif as well as the motif that follows, based on the tonic chord, are displaced by two eighth notes with respect to the beat, thus corresponding to the third position ... as listed by Locke... *Requinto* II now runs simultaneously a short ostinato, which provides the fundamental meter of the *compás* (41-51).

### Appendix 3: Rhythmic devices in “Siquisiri”

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the piece "Siquisiri". It consists of two systems of music. Each system has four staves. The top two staves of each system represent the right and left hands of a harpist. The third staff in each system is for the voice, with lyrics written below it. The lyrics are in Spanish. The first system of lyrics is: "BUE- NAR- TAR- DES SE- ÑO- RES SE- ÑO- RAS Y SE- NO-". The second system of lyrics is: "RI- TAS (se) ÑO- RAS Y SE- ÑO- RI- TAS MUY BUE- NAR- TAR- DES SE- ÑO- RES WA TO-". There are some markings above the voice staff, including a circled '1' and some asterisks.

(Sheehy 304).

This excerpt from Sheehy’s transcription of the *son* that traditionally opens many fandangos exhibits several rhythmic features typical of *son jarocho*. The top two staves represent the right and left hands of the harpist; the third staff down represents the requinto. The *jaranas* are not shown, as Sheehy considered that they collectively played on every eighth note beat; this can be assumed as the first rhythmic line. The *zapateado* percussion is also absent, and might have provided

notable accentuations in sesquialtera. The vocalist enters on the second beat in the first bar of the second system, characteristic of many *sones jarochos*. Here the harp is plucking a figuration in sixteenth notes that gives way to eighths two bars farther along, where the points of emphasis shift from triple meter in the third bar of the system to compound duple in the fourth bar. This is a standard sesquialtera procedure, but it appears almost ad hoc in different parts in performance, including the *zapateado*, which is another rhythmic line altogether, consisting of the standard “café con pan” (eighth eighth QUARTER quarter.) The bass line proceeds in rhythmic imitation of the voice at the second measure, second system; but then shifts to a syncopated placement of sesquialtera in the last bar second system and first bar of the third system. Meanwhile the voice has undertaken an independent set of emphases, reminiscent of African bell patterns, beginning in the third measure, second system. The requinto in the third stave keeps a running series of eighth notes in motion, however the relative pitches and accents enable it to frequently shift emphasis from triple to compound duple and back. The constant and aleatoric shifts of emphases within and among the parts lend a continuously upbeat, unresolved affect.

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Figure 4. *Músico Negro de Veracruz*, painting in *Collección Banco Nacional de México* by Edouard Pingret (García de Leon, *Fandango* 60).

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