

# Harmonizing Development: Exploring Music and Musical Instruments as National Instruments in Colombia and Peru

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**Abstract.** In Colombia and Peru, national music and national musical instruments are essential elements of cultural heritage, yet their importance goes beyond culture. The promotion of national musical instruments also pursues the two countries' social, economic and political development goals. Traditional music, shaped in Colombia and Peru by the customs of indigenous peoples, African rhythms and the legacy of the Spanish Empire, embodies the rich history and culture of the indigenous peoples, helps to preserve traditions and national identity. The study seeks to answer the following questions related to the development and implementation of

national instruments in Colombia and Peru: what are the key features of the national instruments in these countries? How are they developed and implemented? What are the challenges and opportunities arising from using them? How do they contribute to achieving the two countries' development goals? The popularization of national music and musical instruments fosters the feeling of belonging and social cohesion, promotes tourism and plays an important role in education. Music is also related to political processes, as it has become an element of electoral campaigns and a factor to be taken into account when elaborating a national policy on culture and tourism. At the same time, the promotion of music and national instruments poses a number of challenges, including insufficient state funding, lack of official structures to promote local traditions, social and political barriers. Still, music is of paramount importance for Colombia and Peru: musical instruments are not only part of the entertainment industry but also national symbols that harmonize development and cultivate cultural pride.

**Keywords:** Colombia, Peru, national musical instruments, cumbia, vallenato, National Music Plan for Coexistence, Peruvian cajon

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# Гармония развития: музыка и национальные музыкальные инструменты в Колумбии и Перу

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**Аннотация.** В Колумбии и Перу национальная музыка и национальные музыкальные инструменты являются неотъемлемой частью культурного наследия, но они важны не только с культурной точки зрения. Создание и продвижение национальных музыкальных инструментов также отвечает задачам социального, экономического и политического развития этих стран. Традиционная музыка, сформировавшаяся в Колумбии и Перу под влиянием обычаев коренных народов, африканских ритмов и наследия Испанской империи, воплощает в себе богатую историю и культуру коренных народов, помогает сохранить традиции и национальную идентичность. Цель настоящего исследования — ответить на ряд вопросов, связанных с развитием и продвижением национальных музыкальных инструментов, а также оригинальных музыкальных и танцевальных жанров в Колумбии и Перу. В частности, каковы основные характеристики музыкальных инструментов в этих странах? Какие проблемы и возможности связаны с их использованием? Как национальная музыка способствует достижению общих целей развития этих стран? Популяризация национальной музыки и музыкальных инструментов способствует социальной сплоченности и формированию чувства связи со своими корнями, содействует развитию туризма и играет важную роль в сфере образования. Музыка также связана с политическими процессами,

поскольку она стала элементом предвыборных кампаний и фактором, который необходимо учитывать при разработке национальной политики в области культуры и туризма. В то же время существуют сложности, связанные с продвижением национальной музыки и музыкальных инструментов, в том числе недостаточное государственное финансирование, отсутствие официальных структур для развития местных традиций, а также социальные и политические барьеры. Значение национальной музыки в Колумбии и Перу огромно: музыкальные инструменты не просто часть индустрии развлечений, это национальные символы, которые пробуждают в людях гордость за культуру своего народа.

**Ключевые слова:** Колумбия, Перу, национальные музыкальные инструменты, кумбия, вальенато, Национальный план развития музыки, перуанский кахон

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# Harmonizando el desarrollo: explorando la música e instrumentos musicales como instrumentos nacionales en Colombia y Perú

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**Resumen.** En Colombia y Perú, la música nacional y los instrumentos musicales nacionales son elementos integrales del Patrimonio cultural y tienen importancia no solo desde la óptica cultural. La creación y promoción de instrumentos musicales nacionales responde también a los objetivos de desarrollo social, económico y político de estos países. La música tradicional

que se formaba tanto en Colombia como en Perú bajo la influencia de las costumbres de los pueblos indígenas, los ritmos africanos y la herencia del Imperio Español, encarna una rica historia y una cultura auténtica de los pueblos autóctonos, ayuda a preservar las tradiciones y la identidad nacional. El presente estudio tiene por objetivo responder a varias preguntas relacionadas con el desarrollo e implementación de instrumentos musicales nacionales y los géneros de música y danza originales en Colombia y Perú. Entre estas preguntas se encuentran las siguientes: ¿Cuáles son las características clave de los instrumentos musicales en estos países? ¿Cuáles son los desafíos y oportunidades asociados con su uso? ¿Cómo la música nacional y la promoción de otros géneros relacionados con la música contribuyen a los objetivos generales de desarrollo de estos países? La popularización de la música y de los instrumentos musicales nacionales promueve el sentimiento de pertenencia a las raíces locales, conduce a la cohesión social, promueve el turismo y desempeña un papel importante en la educación. La música también está relacionada con los procesos políticos, ya que se ha convertido en un elemento de las campañas electorales y un factor que debe tenerse en cuenta en la formulación de políticas nacionales en esferas de cultura y turismo. Al mismo tiempo, existen dificultades para promover el apoyo de la música nacional y el uso de instrumentos nacionales, incluida la falta de la financiación suficiente del estado, la ausencia de estructuras oficiales para desarrollar las tradiciones locales, también las barreras sociales y políticas lo impiden. Sin embargo, la importancia de la música nacional en Colombia y Perú es enorme: los instrumentos musicales no solo son parte de la industria del entretenimiento, sino son símbolos nacionales y hacen que la gente se sienta orgullosa de su cultura.

**Palabras clave:** Colombia, Perú, instrumentos musicales nacionales, cumbia, vallenato, Plan Nacional de Música para la Convivencia, cajón peruano

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People have often selected one specific musical instrument as a sign of their cultural or national identity, whether voluntarily or not. A musical instrument generally qualifies as a national instrument when it is highly regarded and revered as a representation of a specific culture or country. The choice of national instruments may require consulting with specialists, artists, and community members and is frequently affected by historical, cultural, and political issues. The promotion of national instruments may be part of broader initiatives to protect and advance cultural heritage and may be connected to travel, education, and other facets of forging a sense of national identity.

The objective of this study is to analyze the concept of national instruments in Colombia and Peru, and to examine the sociopolitical processes that surround them. The study aims to understand how these instruments are developed, implemented, and evaluated, and how they contribute to the overall development goals of these countries.

The theoretical approach used in this study is a combination of political economy, institutionalism, and policy analysis.

Music and musical instruments of Andean nations have been investigated by many scholars, e.g. Robert Neustadt [Neustadt, 2007], Aurelio Tello [Tello, 2004], Gabriela Torres Jara [Torres Jara et al., 2018].

Robert Neustadt's work «Reading Indigenous and Mestizo Musical Instruments: The Negotiation of Political and Cultural Identities in Latin America» explores the complex interplay between musical instruments and political and cultural identities in Latin America. Neustadt presents the concept of «cultural location», which includes not only geographical features but also the values and traditions that are intrinsic to particular communities at particular historical moments. His argument that cultural identity is a dynamic process shaped by ongoing negotiations among various cultural elements is in line with the work of scholars like S. Hall [Hall, 1990: 222–237] or H.K. Bhabha [Bhabha, 1994], who emphasize the fluidity of identity and the role of hybridity in postcolonial contexts.

His analysis of the son, the national dance of Guatemala, as explained by ethnomusicologist Carlos Monsanto [Monsanto, 1982: 65], exemplifies this process of hybridization, which echoes the research of B. Nettl [Nettl, 2005] and J. Todd Titon [Todd Titon, 2009], who have investigated related topics in various cultural contexts.

According to Neustadt, musical instruments actively contribute to the continuing process of transculturation rather than acting as passive carriers of cultural expression, which is supported by the ideas of theorists like Edward W. Said [Said, 1979] or Gayatri Ch. Spivak [Spivak, 2006], who address cultural practices as sites of resistance against prevailing narratives.

Neustadt's emphasis on native instruments like marimbas, chirimías, and Indian fiddles, makes it possible to examine how these musical genres have changed in reaction to historical events. In order to produce new forms reflective of their cultural reality, indigenous civilizations have frequently appropriated European instruments. The intricacies of cultural exchange and the power dynamics ingrained in colonial histories are revealed by this process of innovation and adaptation, which is a crucial component of identity building.

Neustadt's work differs from conventional musicological analyses since his methodology is based in cultural studies rather than ethnomusicology. He uses a wide range of sources, such as Central American documentaries, literary works, and anthropological research. By examining academic findings in addition to musical commentary, Neustadt interacts with a variety of viewpoints that enhance his



*Chirimía*

interpretation. This strategy is part of a larger movement in modern research that values interdisciplinary discussion and gives voice to underrepresented groups [Turino, 2008].

Aurelio Tello's «Aires Nacionales en la Música de América Latina...» examines the connection between music and cultural identity in Latin America. Tello explores how music serves as a vehicle for the expression of national identity and a window into the complex sociocultural forces that have created the region [Tello, 2004]. According to Tello, music is a powerful way for a people to express its collective identity, experiences and goals. Tello provides examples of how particular musical genres, melodies and songs have come to be recognized as national emblems, signifying not only native customs but also the colonial and immigrant influences that have molded Latin American music culture.



*Musical miscegenation.  
An Indian playing Spanish instruments*

Miscegenation of cultures is another important issue. Tello explains how the amalgamation of native African and European components has resulted in an abundant musical variety that mirrors the continent's intricate past. This combination resists hegemonic narratives and enhances the musical landscape. As a result, stereotypes are questioned and identities are reshaped through music.

Exploring Ecuador's cultural diversity, Gabriela Torres Jara, Narcisa Ullauri, and Jessica Lalangui's article «The Andean celebrations and popular parties as an anesthetic identity of Ecuador» emphasizes the importance of Andean celebrations in forming the nation's ancestral identity. The paper analyzes these joyous displays as a reflection of a specific worldview that unites people with their natural and spiritual environments through an interdisciplinary approach that blends sociology and cultural anthropology [Torres Jara et al., 2018: 289].

Celebrations and rituals in Andean communities have roots in historical events and are inextricably connected to legends, customs, and creative expression, hence they serve as social cohesiveness mechanisms, bringing people together to exchange stories and deepen links within the community. Furthermore, celebrations are connected to an individual's life cycle, suggesting that rituals associated with each period of life aid in the passage of community members through various existential phases, making celebrations vital parts of community life rather than just customs.



### ***Colombian music: cumbia, bambuco, porro, champeta and vallenato as national symbols***

Colombia is well known for its cultural diversity and wide range of musical styles. The country's history is reflected in the music, which has been shaped by African rhythms, indigenous customs, and Spanish imperial legacy.

The most well-known rhythm connected to Colombian music is probably *cumbia*. Cumbia is a music genre that originated in the Caribbean and combines Spanish, African, and Indigenous components. Traditionally, it includes instruments like maracas, flutes (such as the «gaita»), and drums (like the «tambora»). The 2/4 beat of *cumbia* is contagious and encourages celebration and dancing.

Throughout time, the genre has changed, absorbing elements from various musical genres including rock and salsa as well as contemporary instruments. *Cumbia* has become a global phenomenon, impacting musicians not only in Colombia but also in other parts of Latin America. Often performed at festivals and other cultural occasions, the beat acts as a representation of national identity.



*Instruments of the Colombian cumbia*

Colombia's Andean region is the origin of the traditional rhythm known as *bambuco*. It is distinguished by its 6/8 time signature and is frequently performed with percussion instruments like the tambor and string instruments like the guitar and bandola. *Bambuco* is typically performed at festivals and other cultural events, and its lyrics frequently discuss love and the natural world.



*Porro, the musical rhythm of the Caribbean*

The vibrant beat known as *porro* came from Colombia's coastal areas, especially the Caribbean. It creates a lively sound using brass instruments like trumpets and trombones coupled with percussion instruments by fusing African rhythms with European compositional principles. *Porro* is a mainstay during festivities and festivals, frequently performed by big bands called «picos» or «orquestas».

Over time, the rhythm has changed, absorbing aspects from different genres including salsa and jazz. In addition to being a kind of entertainment, *porro* is used in social events and cultural manifestations.

The relatively young genre of *champeta*, which originated in the seaside city of Cartagena, has become more and more popular since late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hip-hop, techno music, and reggae are all incorporated, with a strong emphasis on African rhythms. *Champeta* is known for its upbeat dance style and quick beats.

The genre acts as a form of protest against cultural marginalization and represents the experiences of Afro-Colombian people. *Champeta* is now widely recognized both domestically and internationally thanks to artists such as Mr. Black, who have brought it to life as a vivid embodiment of modern Colombian culture.

The popular folk music style known as *vallenato* has its roots in Colombia's Caribbean area, namely in the provinces of La Guajira, Cesar, and Magdalena. The indigenous tribes that lived in the area before the Spanish colonists arrived can be linked to the roots of vallenato.

*Vallenato*, also known as vallenato music, is a Colombian Caribbean Coast musical genre with its origins in the former province of Padilla (now southern La Guajira, northern Cesar, and eastern Magdalena) and ancestral presence in the savannah regions of the departments of Bolivar, Sucre, and Cordoba. The accordion was brought to Riohacha, La Guajira, by German settlers at the end of the nineteenth century, and both the strophic organization and the metric are based on the Spanish tradition; on the other hand, the component of Afro-Colombian slaves is present with the *caja vallenata*, a type of drum that largely gives the rhythm to the accordion melody, and finally the indigenous component is evident with the guacharaca.

*Vallenato* rose to popularity in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It resulted in the establishment of festivals in which accordionists compete for the title of most talented performer. The most well-known of these festivals is the *Festival de la Leyenda Vallenata*, which takes place in Valledupar each year in late April and was first held in 1968. Since 1987, the Festival Cuna *de Acordeones* in Villanueva, Guajira, has become the second most important.

The use of the diatonic accordion in vallenato demands the use of both sides of the accordion at the same time. This distinguishes the Colombian accordion from other accordion music genres in which the bass section (played with the left hand) is often muted or underutilized: in Colombia, the accordion player's harmonic and rhythmic handling of the basses is a significant qualifying criterion in vallenato events.

The three traditional instruments of the vallenato are the *caja vallenata*, the guacharaca and the accordion. The *caja*, a type of small drum made by hand from the hollow trunk of dry trees and sealed at one end with a piece of hardened leather,



and the *guacharaca*, an ancient indigenous instrument made of a piece of reed to which small successive grooves were applied, were the first instruments used to interpret the melodies of these songs.

Years after its creation, in the late 1800s, European sailors and pirates brought the accordion to Colombia through the port of Riohacha on the Guajira Peninsula. From that point on, cowboys and peasants were its constant companions as they discovered its melodic secrets, incorporated it into their musical expressions, and eventually it replaced the carrizo to become the primary instrument of the typical vallenato music ensemble.

The *caja*, *guacharaca*, and *accordion*, which represent the tri-ethnicity that gave rise to the race and culture of the Colombian Caribbean Coast, are joined by the singer, who has only recently been incorporated into the typical vallenato ensemble as a result of the vallenato festivals. Before the 1960s, the accordion player or accordionist was expected to carry the singing voice.

The *Paseo*, *Merengue*, *Puya*, and *Son* rhythms are the only ones used in Vallenato music, and they are also the only rhythms required for the Vallenato Festival, which is held annually in Valledupar, the departmental capital of Cesar. This festival sets the bar for the preservation of this folklore, and it is also where the best *acordeonero* (accordion player) is chosen and crowned king.



*Instruments of the Vallenato*

### ***Vallenato folklore and politics***

Vallenato folklore and politics remain deeply intertwined. Since ancient times, composers and performers have worked in cooperation with candidates for elected office; they have composed and sung for many politicians.

President Alfonso López Michelsen<sup>1</sup> (1974–1978), the first governor of the department and one of the national figures who had the most impact on Cesar's politics and culture, was given a list of vallenato songs. In vallenato songs, López Michelsen has found a tremendous source of inspiration. His name is remembered because of his active involvement in local and national politics, his key role in the development of the Vallenato Festival, and the adoration he and his wife inspired among the locals.

<sup>1</sup> Alfonso López Michelsen was a Colombian politician and lawyer who served as the 24<sup>th</sup> President of Colombia from 1974 to 1978. He was nicknamed «El Pollo» (The Chicken), a popular Colombian idiom for people with precocious careers. — [AN].

Among the standout songs are those by Luis Enrique Martínez (1923–1995), who compares the president to Jorge Eliécer Gaitán<sup>2</sup> (1903–1948), and by Calixto Ochoa<sup>3</sup> (1934–2015), who wrote one to commemorate his election victory in 1978: «Now it is Lopez who has the power, because the people elected him, and Pepe Castro is running for senator, he is known in the entire region»<sup>4</sup>.

The most well-known song, however, was written by Rafael Escalona<sup>5</sup> (1927–2009) and performed by Alfredo Gutiérrez<sup>6</sup> (1943 – present) during the 1978 campaign. It was entitled «López, El Pollo, López el gallo, el Presidente de todos los colombianos» and was sung by the whole electorate of the Atlantic coast in unison. This song established a new bond between politics and vallenato singing due to its power and the significance it acquired throughout the successful campaign.



*Alfonso López Michelsen and his influence on the diffusion of the vallenato*

In 2018, B. Beto Vanegas from the Javeriana University in Colombia conducted a study to determine the relationship between the support of vallenato music performers for Colombian presidential candidates and the electoral behavior of Valledupar citizens in the first round of the presidential election at the time. The study took into consideration several factors such as age, socioeconomic strata, party affiliation, liking for vallenato, with primary information collected through a survey and analyzed in the R programming language. The findings contributed to

<sup>2</sup> Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was a Colombian political leader. He served as mayor of Bogotá (1936) and minister of education (1940). In 1946, he ran for the presidential office in opposition to the official Liberal Party candidate Gabriel Turbay. Following the victory of the Conservative Party candidate Mariano Ospina Pérez, Gaitán was expected to be elected president in the next election, but he was killed in 1948 during the International Conference of American States in Bogotá. The assassination led to a major popular uprising known as the *bogotazo* and a period of civil unrest called the *violencia*. — [AN].

<sup>3</sup> Calixto Antonio Ochoa Field, better known in the musical world as *El Viejo Calo* or *Calixto Ochoa*, was a famous Colombian vallenato singer and composer. In 1970, Calixto Ochoa was crowned King of Vallenato at the Festival of the Vallenato Legend. His most popular songs include *Los Sabanales*, *Angelos*, *La Medallita*, *Charanga Campesina*, *La Malgeniosa*, *El Cantor De Valencia*, *Cumbia Campesina*. — [AN].

<sup>4</sup> Oñate J., Araújo S. Cuando el vallenato y la política iban de la mano. *Revista Credencial*. 03.07.2015. URL: <https://www.revistacredencial.com/noticia/reportajes/cuando-el-vallenato-y-la-politica-iban-de-la-mano> (accessed: 18.03.2024).

<sup>5</sup> Rafael Escalona was a prominent Colombian vallenato composer and troubadour, one of the co-founders of the Vallenato Legend Festival. Escalona revolutionized Colombia's vallenato tradition, modernizing the music's rough, accordion-based sound via the addition of vividly detailed narratives evoking the rhythms and rigors of working-class life. — [AN].

<sup>6</sup> Alfredo Gutiérrez is a Colombian musician, accordion player, composer, arranger and singer of Vallenato music, nicknamed «The accordion rebel». So far, he is the only accordionist who has been King of the Vallenato Legend Festival three times in the Professional Category. — [AN].

an examination of the voting behavior of a Colombian area, revealing how fans of a particular vallenato artist tended to vote for a political candidate [Beto Vanegas, 2019].

It is also worth noting Vallenato's significance in governmental policy on culture and tourism [Bolívar, Lizarazo, 2021]. It is regarded as an important component of the country's cultural history and is often commemorated at festivals and gatherings. The Colombian government has acknowledged the value of Vallenato in promoting Colombia's cultural identity and has launched initiatives to promote this music form. For example, in 2015, vallenato was recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This honor emphasizes Vallenato's contribution to maintaining Colombia's cultural variety and encouraging social harmony. Moreover, the Ministry of Culture has developed a program called *Música en movimiento*, which attempts to promote traditional music genres such as Vallenato among young people<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, the government has provided grants and subsidies to Vallenato musicians and festivals. For instance, the Ministry of Culture funds the yearly Festival de la Leyenda Vallenata, one of Colombia's most important Vallenato festivities.



*Vallenato, part of Colombia's national identity*

Vallenato is a type of music that has been crucial in forming Colombia's national identity. It originated on Colombia's Caribbean coast, expanded over the whole nation, and is now regarded as a representation of Colombian culture. Vallenato's topics frequently center on relationships, the natural world, and societal concerns, reflecting the Colombian people's experiences and tribulations. Incorporating traditional instruments like the guacharaca, caja vallenata, and accordion, vallenato represents Colombia's indigenous, African, and European cultural heritage.

Vallenato represents the rich cultural legacy of the Colombian people and is an essential component of Colombian national identity. In an effort to bring people together, it has been used in social movements, political campaigns, and national celebrations of the various cultures that make up the country. It will without a

<sup>7</sup> ¡Vive la música! Ministerio de las Culturas las Artes y los Saberes. 15.10.2021. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAoIVBJw0KQ> (accessed: 18.03.2024).

doubt continue to play a significant role in defining Colombia's cultural identity for many years to come because of its popularity and impact, which are growing both domestically and internationally.

### ***The National Music Plan for Coexistence***

The inclusion of music in public policy initiatives holds significant potential for achieving broader societal objectives. The National Music Plan for Coexistence (*Plan Nacional de Música para la Convivencia*, PNMCM) in Colombia, born within the Development Plan of the 2002–2006 government, has become a state policy that has permeated the last four presidential terms. This plan, with its focus on building citizenship through music, has demonstrated a constant commitment to inclusion, cultural diversity, and social transformation<sup>8</sup>.

Its primary objective lies in expanding and strengthening the practice, knowledge, and enjoyment of music in Colombia, promoting artistic creation and the construction of a more cohesive society. However, in its latest four-year period, the PNMCM has placed a special emphasis on attending the populations affected by the Colombian armed conflict, using music as a tool for psychosocial care and hope for a more dignified future.

The PNMCM is a policy based on the participation of diverse actors, with presence in all municipalities and departments of the country, involving departmental and municipal institutions, as well as community organizations as fundamental actors.

The National Music Plan was conceived from a comprehensive vision of the musical field, affirming musical practice as a right for all or as a source of opportunities to guarantee musical development for children, young people, and adults in the country without restrictions. It conceives music as a constitutive dimension of the individual, their subjectivity, and their recognition as a member of the community, as well as an integrating dimension that fosters collective encounters and the construction of coexistence and democracy [Medina, 2018: 5].

The plan has been instrumental in promoting musical development in Colombia, demonstrating its commitment to creating equitable access to music education. Between 2014 and 2017, the PNMCM, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, constructed six architectural prototypes of music schools in various regions, including El Carmen de Bolívar and Tumaco. These schools act as catalysts for musical development within communities, providing access to musical education and training music professionals. Furthermore, the PNMCM has strengthened 900 municipal music schools out of the 1037, representing 94 % of the total nationwide,

<sup>8</sup> Implementación Plan Nacional de Música para la Convivencia. Departamento Nacional de Planeación. 10.06.2010. URL: [https://spi.dnp.gov.co/anexos/201006/201006-1190001280000-23-07-2010\\_03.29.35\\_p.m.-Resumen%20Ejecutivo%20PNMCM%20para%20DNP.pdf](https://spi.dnp.gov.co/anexos/201006/201006-1190001280000-23-07-2010_03.29.35_p.m.-Resumen%20Ejecutivo%20PNMCM%20para%20DNP.pdf) (accessed: 20.05.2024).



thereby reaching a vast majority of Colombian municipalities. The PNMC has also given extensive support to these schools through 2839 on-site musical, pedagogical, and management consultations. Additionally, the program has played a crucial role in developing Departmental Musical Development Plans, with 4 departments currently possessing strategic plans and four more being under construction. The PNMC has trained 752 community leaders in cultural management and project design, actively encouraging community participation in musical development.

The plan<sup>9</sup> is structured around seven key components: management, responsible for program planning, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation; formation, offering musical training programs for various levels and audiences; research, promoting musical research, knowledge creation, and innovation; information, disseminating knowledge about music and available resources for its development; equipment and infrastructure, providing musical instruments and resources for building musical spaces; entrepreneurship and production, supporting the development of musical projects and the creation of music-related businesses; and creation and circulation, encouraging musical creation and the dissemination of music in diverse formats. The PNMC focuses on developing various musical practices in Colombia, including wind bands, choirs, traditional music, symphony orchestras, and urban music.

### ***Music and musical instruments of Peru: from pre-Hispanic era to modern times***

Starting from the pre-Hispanic era, the first Peruvian civilizations date back more than 5000 years with cultures such as *Caral*, *Wari*, *Nazca*, *Paracas*, *Moche*, etc. Back then societies attributed the most important powers to their religious leaders, while their lifestyles were continuous offerings to gods in all sort of ceremonies.

During that period such instruments as *Quena* and *Zampoña* were widespread in the ancient Peruvian territory and given various names depending on the region and the time, especially the latter instrument; *Antara*, *Siku*, *Ayara-chi* are different names of *Zampoña* in different Peruvian regions.



*Traditional clothing of pre-Hispanic cultures of Peru*

<sup>9</sup> Plan Nacional de Música para la Convivencia. Departamento Nacional de Planeación. URL: [https://spi.dnp.gov.co/App\\_Themes/SeguimientoProyectos/ResumenEjecutivo/1190001280000.pdf](https://spi.dnp.gov.co/App_Themes/SeguimientoProyectos/ResumenEjecutivo/1190001280000.pdf) (accessed: 20.05.2024).



Among all cultures Nazca is the one that stands out. Studies in archaeology highlight this civilization as one of the pioneers in this field in the American continent, as Nazca created and used music with basic notes for religious purposes, battle victories, or just plain profanity.

In fact, music was performed alongside rituals performed to worship some of their deities, such as the god Kon. Studies and archaeological excavations uncovered complete remains and instruments that intrigued researchers since they were embellished with mastic, figures, and animals; the instruments also often had anthropomorphic shapes, such as heads of people or animals.

Music is directly linked to the art of weaving, the art of cooking and seasoning food, as well as the art of fighting. There have also been found depictions of dances and music from religious, magical, and warrior cultures in different ceramics which were used for the ancestor deities' ceremonial music.

However, the arrival of the Spanish in 1492 and the subsequent invasion of Peru in 1572 brought change. After the settlement of the Spanish power in the continent, there was repression against everything considered profane. At the time religion and politics were strongly connected; a world which was not Christian and did not follow its practices was deemed impure and, therefore, had to change. Censorship took down musical instruments and music styles characteristic of the native Peruvian people: from that moment on, music was mostly influenced by European heritage. New musical instruments emerged marking contemporary Peruvian history, including the Spanish guitar and in minor ways the violin or the gaita.

There existed a lot of local music, but after the imposition of one culture on another and due to the limitations of the time, the recognition of Spanish artists was preferred to the Peruvian works that were mostly in Quechua. Traditional instruments such as the *Zampoña* and the *Quena* were practically forgotten following the process of extirpation of idolatry due to the new laws that prohibited their use.



*Quena and Zampoña*

Churches began to control everything related to music, with many of them having their own orchestras and musicians for festivities and processions. Because they were in a foreign continent at the time, the new Peruvians started to develop their own taste for music: always inspired by the «Motherland» Spain, they adapted some of the well-known rhythms with slight and then major changes.

After the independence of Latin America, restrictions were lifted, so local musicians, who did not come from the high spheres of the previous administration or had a direct relationship with Spain, were able to make their works known. For instance, José Bernardo Alcedo (1788–1878), a «mulatto», composed the nation-

al anthem of Peru, which would have been inconceivable in the colonial period. Due to the strong European influence of the era, popular music attracted a lot of attention in the cities throughout the conquest period in Peru, in addition to the traditional Peruvian music of peasant origin.

After musical miscegenation, some of the most interesting combinations are born, such as mixes between the four-string guitar from Spanish heritage, African rhythms and pentaphonic music of the Inca style. Coming from already established styles in Europe some musical genres got their adaptation as the Slavic Polka or Spanish Zamacueca, resulting in a combination that became part of Peru's identity.



*José Bernardo Alcedo*

### ***Marinera, huayno, chicha reflecting Peruvian identity***

One of the most popular rhythms born is the popular Marinera. It is danced using handkerchiefs as props, the dance is a mix of Spanish contradanza and Andean zamacueca, and is a stylized reenactment of a courtship, showing a blend of the different cultures of Peru. The dance has gained recognition throughout South America and is known as the most prominent traditional dance of Peru. It is accompanied by several instruments: cajón, clarinets, guitars, drums, and bugles.



*Marinera, postcolonial musical rhythm*

*Cajon* has accompanied many new songs and most important melodies in new Peru's era, being played for the already mentioned *Marinera* and other ballroom dances.

With the arrival of new technologies and development of industries, the quality of life in most cities increased, attracting people from all over the country. In 1950, many migrants reached Lima. In this environment, with an internal urban market made up of Andians, the *huayno*, their most well-known dance and song, a combination between the native and Spanish culture, achieved commercial success.

Meanwhile, by the end of the 1960s, a different musical genre from a nearby nation made its way to be famous across the continent: Colombian cumbia, which would be important for the development of the Peruvian version of cumbia. The Colombian influence through cumbia became evident quickly, since the Peruvian musical genre known as *chicha* was born from a combination of *huayno* and *cumbia*. It has pentatonic scales in 4/4 and is richly flavored by rudimentary foreign rhythms such as *guaracha*, *mambo*, *salsa*, *rock*. Instruments that support effects such as *delay* and *fuzz-tone* (a sound immortalized in the hands of José Luis Carballo) gave Peru a new identity as a multicultural society full of distinctive sounds.

The newcomers struggled to adapt themselves to new conditions as the urban and rural areas were completely different: the atmosphere in the capital and its music were completely different to those in small villages. This combination of cultures gave birth to new types of rhythms and later on would influence even the popularity of some big actors of Peruvian politics.

Ricardo Palma, a renowned and prestigious author of some traditional Peruvian books of the era, argued in his book «Peruvian traditions» that this musical aspect stems from a culture shock between the new integrants of metropolis facing the traditions of the city [Palma, 2008].

In the new millennium music is developing with the advance of *Technocumbia*, the use of electric guitars and synthesizers along with the other classical instruments of the Colombian *cumbia* creating a kind of tropical sound. Moreover, traditional Peruvian music is quite present in public and political life of the country. For instance, it was during the 2000 presidential election when the aforementioned *chicha* music stood out, favoring the candidacy of Alberto Fujimori [Ramiro Cárdenas, 2014], who, nevertheless, following a highly controversial election process, fled Peru heading to Japan.

With a long history and being the meeting point of many cultures and civilizations, today's Peruvian music encapsulates the country's *mestizo* heritage.

\* \* \*

Music and musical instruments hold a deep significance in Colombia and Peru, going beyond mere entertainment to become national symbols that harmonize development and cultivate cultural pride. Nevertheless, there are still challenges in navigating the complex landscape of national instruments. The very act of defining what constitutes a «national instrument» proves difficult, given the



«Los Shapis», Peruvian chicha group

fluidity and diversity of cultural identities and musical traditions. Furthermore, there is a risk of cultural appropriation and commodification, where these instruments are exploited for profit without due respect for their cultural significance [Gómez López, 2018]. Other challenges include securing adequate funding and resources and the lack of formal structures and policies dedicated to promoting cultural heritage and national instruments. Finally, social and political barriers, including discrimination, inequality, and limited access to opportunities, can hinder the participation of diverse communities in the development and use of these instruments.

In both Colombia and Peru, traditional music is an essential part of their cultural heritage. It encapsulates the rich history, traditions, and narratives of the people, providing them with a means to connect with their ancestors and roots. Music serves as a vessel for cultural preservation so that customs and traditions are not lost in the face of globalization.

National instruments play an important role in protecting and reviving cultural heritage, ensuring the survival of music traditions. Creating and promoting these instruments can provide revenue for artists, artisans, and cultural businesses. Furthermore, national instruments can help to promote a feeling of national identity and social cohesiveness while also overcoming cultural barriers and encouraging understanding between populations. They can also serve as a major draw for cultural tourism, boosting economic growth and worldwide cultural interaction. Finally, incorporating national instruments into music education programs can help kids engage with cultural traditions and inspire artistic expression, resulting in a greater awareness of their cultural heritage.

Musicians and organizations take innovative approaches to blend traditional instruments with contemporary music styles demonstrating the versatility and relevance of traditional instruments in the modern world. This evolution not only keeps the music alive, but also attracts new audiences and encourages cultural exchange.

Importantly, music has a role beyond entertainment and cultural preservation. Music has the power to promote social cohesion by bringing diverse people together and fostering a sense of belonging. It transcends boundaries and unites communities through a shared appreciation for art and culture. Music also plays a vital role in education by providing opportunities for learning and creative expression.

Moreover, traditional music and instruments have proven to be an attraction for tourists seeking an authentic cultural experience. This type of cultural tourism contributes to the local economy, creating employment opportunities and promoting overall socioeconomic development.



*Charango*



Music is essential to the cultural identities of Colombia and Peru. Traditional musical instruments that are employed as symbols of national pride and community include the *charango* in Peru and the *gaita* in Colombia. As traditional music promotes inclusive environments that support cultures, this is consistent with Sustainable Cities and Communities Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

As music education develops students' cognitive skills and discipline, it can make a substantial contribution to academic goals. Academic performance can be enhanced and creativity can be fostered by programs that integrate music education into the curriculum [Hallam, 2010: 281–282]. For example, the «El Sistema» organization in Colombia employs music education to help underprivileged youngsters build lifelong skills<sup>10</sup>. By encouraging inclusive and equitable quality education, this advances SDG Goal 4 (Quality Education).

Economic development can also come from the music industry. Colombian musicians now have more options to participate in the international market because of the growth of genres like *vallenato* and *cumbia*. Similarly, Peru's rich musical history, along with the evolution and changes it has undergone attracts tourists and locals, boosting regional economies. Both countries may drive economic growth and create jobs by investing in music-related industries, such as instrument manufacture or music tourism. SDG Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) is in line with this.

Music and musical instruments are integral parts of Colombian and Peruvian culture, serving as powerful tools for promoting cultural heritage and cultivating national unity. By embracing their traditional music and instruments, Colombia and Peru have unlocked boundless possibilities for their own development while nurturing a sense of pride and identity among their people.

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