MUSICKING IN MÉRIDA:
CREATING AND MAINTAINING HISTORY AND CULTURE THROUGH
LA ESCUELA MUNICIPAL DE FOLCLORE REGIONAL

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ABSTRACT

David Harnish, Advisor

The Yucatán Peninsula has been a favorite vacation destination for decades. Outside of the resorts of Cancún, Cozumel, and the Mayan Riviera, visitors are able to travel throughout the peninsula in search of mestizo (mixed) gems: Yucatecan cuisine, artisan crafts, music, and ruins. The largest of these exotic destinations is the capital city, Mérida, which sits on the ancient ruins of T’hó.

Founded in 1542 by Francisco de Montejo, Mérida rapidly became a cosmopolitan area with Spanish, Maya,\(^1\) and later mestizo peoples who crafted a hybrid of Spanish and indigenous culture. Today, almost five hundred years later, the Yucatecans are proud of their heritage. They have the opportunity to learn Mayan or perfect the colonial dances, called the jarana, through the help of the municipal government’s assistance. With tax dollars, the Ayuntamiento de Mérida, a branch of the city’s municipal government, opened schools thirty years ago throughout the city, encouraging students old and young to preserve and share their musical history.

Through this unique governmental support, music and dance survive and are seen as important icons of the region. The strength of the schools during the past thirty years has led to nightly performances in outdoor venues in the historical city for natives and foreigners alike. Researchers in the past rarely focused on the performance and tourist

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\(^1\) It is a common misconception to call the natives of the Yucatán Peninsula “Mayans.” They are actually called the “Mayas.” Mayan refers to their spoken language, not the identity of the people.
aspects of the *jarana* and its importance, and there has been no interest generated on the schools that maintain this strong tradition. This thesis is the first work to focus on the school, its history, and its relationship to the Ballet Folklórico, a semi-professional club of dance that perform each week. Using the concept of “musicking” as developed by Christopher Small, I explore the many forces at work in the performance and teaching of the *jarana* and other arts of the Yucatán.
“¡Bomba!...” piden por allí, 
y no es muy mala la ocurrencia 
de cometer la imprudencia 
de echar una “bomba” aquí, 
que pudiera hacer pedazos 
a la mujer por quien di 
mí corazón y mis brazos; 
mas, si se tratara así 
de rendirte pleitesía, 
no “bombas” reventaría, 
preciosa, sino cañonazos!

Gregorio Ortega Jiménez (Ruy de Luna)²

“Bomba!” they ask over there, 
and it is not a bad occurrence 
to commit the imprudence 
to miss a “bomba” here, 
that would be able to smash 
the woman who gave 
my heart and my arms; 
but, if she treats you like this 
to wear oneself out 
no “bombas” will be exploded 
precious, without cannon shots!

² Javier Covo Torres, ed. La Bomba Yucateca, 17.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband and best friend, Sean, and our furry dog, Baxter. Thank you for understanding my crazy schedule and long hours. I also appreciate Baxter not eating my running shoes when I missed a day of running to work on this document! It’s been a long haul, but the running and family time shall now begin.

To my mom, dad, and brother, thanks for believing and supporting my crazy antics to go to graduate school instead of getting a “big person” job. I will always appreciate all your love and support.

This thesis is also dedicated to my undergraduate history professor, Dr. Matthew Steel. Thank you for believing in me and seeing something different. It most definitely has not gone to waste. I cherish every opportunity that this journey has brought me. I shall become an interesting “ethnomusiceducator.”
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The field research for this project was funded in part by Pro Musica, the Graduate Student Senate, and the Graduate Student Travel Grant. Without their assistance, I would not have been able to follow my academic goals.

Muchas gracias a la Escuela Municipal de Folclore Regional de Mérida y, también, el Departamento del Ayuntamiento de Desarrollo Cultural. Gracias a Deyanira y Evelín para toda su ayuda y toda su información, y también, las visitas a la escuela, la grabación de las clases, y de todo. Yo aprendí mucho. Gracias a todas los profesores de la jarana, también.

(I would like to thank the Escuela Municipal de Folclore Regional de Mérida as well as the Ayunamiento Department of Cultural Development. Thank you, Deyanira and Evelín, for all your help and information, and also for allowing me to come into your schools and programs to record classes, participate in classes, and learn more about the program. Thank you, as well, to the dance instructors of the school).

A great big thank you to my good friend Ryan Mays, who was my helping hand in Mérida: carrying equipment, accompanying me to interviews and performances, and being so supportive during those eleven days. Thank you so much for all your help! I definitely would have been lonely without your company. I’m also glad I finally got you speaking Spanish and not calling Mérida “Merída.” You have done well, young grasshopper. It’s great to see somebody else fall in love with the Yucatecan culture as I have.
Thank you, too, to Dr. David Harnish for all his guidance and support throughout this process. It sure has been long and hard journey. I appreciate all that you have done for me these past two years.

A final and special thanks to Susannah Cleveland, who turned out to be my last minute thesis reader. I truly appreciate all your help and friendship this past year. Your comments and suggestions were always helpful.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush Invasion, 2007</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vaquería</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musicking in Mérida</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II. HISTORY OF THE YUCATÁN</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Columbian Period</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Popol Vuh</em></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>El Libro de los Libros de Chilam Balam</em></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonization Period</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco de Montejo and the Founding of Mérida</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franciscan Involvement and Fray Diego de Landa</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Yucatán</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Porfiriato</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Revolución to Yucatán Today</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III. THE <em>JARANA</em> AND THE <em>VAQUERÍA</em></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Studies</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The <em>Bomba</em></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Instructor’s Views</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description of a Bootlegged Source .......................................................... 46

CHAPTER IV. THE MUNICIPAL SCHOOL .................................................... 48
Evelin Arzapalo Caballero ................................................................. 54
Learning the Dance ............................................................................. 56

CHAPTER V. THE HELP OF THE AYUNTAMIENTO .................................. 61
Direccion de Desarrollo Cultural and Deyanira Aguilar Pacheco ........... 61

CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSIONS: MUSICKING THE JARANA AND YUCATECAN
IDENTITY ............................................................................................... 66
Future Research ................................................................................... 68

APPENDIX I. PRE-COLUMBIAN INSTRUMENTS ......................................... 71

APPENDIX II. THE BOOTLEGGED SOURCE ............................................. 73
The Vaquerias of the Yucatan Peninsula ............................................... 74
La jarana ............................................................................................. 77
Origin of Yucatecan Dance .................................................................. 84

APPENDIX III. THE STEPS ....................................................................... 88
The Steps ............................................................................................ 89

APPENDIX IV. INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHIES .......................................... 95
Maria Concepcion Echeverria ............................................................ 95
Renan Andres Chan Flores ............................................................... 96
Yamile Ivette Miranda Montanez ....................................................... 97
Guadalupe Parra ............................................................................... 97

GLOSSARY ............................................................................................ 99
REFERENCES ....................................................................................... 102
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure/Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sergio, the Ballet’s Poet, Reciting a Bomba</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dancers of the Ballet Folklórico del Ayuntamiento de Mérida</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>George W. Bush Protest Sign</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Monday Evening Riot Underneath the Municipal Palace</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ballet Folklórico Infantil Dancer</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Daily Events in the City of Mérida through the Ayuntamiento</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ballet Folklórico Dancers Dancing “La Mestiza”</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Map of the Yucatán Peninsula</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The Maya Calendar</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gonzalo Guerrero and the First Mestizo Family</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Francisco de Montejo, his Son, and Nephew</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dancers with Their Arms Upright, as Carrying Baskets of Corn on Their Heads</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>“La Danza de las Cintas”</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Municipal School of Mérida</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The Entryway/Waiting Area of the Municipal School</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The Main Classroom Upstairs</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Students Rehearsing in a Circular Pattern</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Socialization</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Students from the Municipal School: Aurora, Mayra, Bella, and Belen</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>“El Baile de la Charrola”</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The Building of La Secretaría del Desarrollo Cultural</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Dancing with the Tray Becomes More Difficult on a Box</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>“El Torito”</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td><em>Tunkúl</em></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Zacatán</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>“Las Mujeres que se Pintan”</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mesticita, mesticita,
tu vestido regional
tiene más vivos colores que la aurora matinal.
Mesticita, mesticita,
tú eres símbolo de amores
de esta tierra del Mayab.  

Little mestiza, little mestiza,
your regional dress
has more colors than the morning dawn
little mestiza, little mestiza,
you are the symbol of lovers
of this land of Mayab.

-Luis María Aguilar

 Torres, La Bomba Yucateca, 40.
I originally planned to focus my thesis specifically on the Ballet Folklórico de Mérida and its relationship to cultural tourism. After arriving in Mérida during the 2007 spring break, however, I became interested in new perspectives focusing on the jarana, the Yucatecans, and their history. One of my first stops to make contacts, La Escuela Municipal de Folclore Regional de Mérida (Municipal School of Regional Folklore), ended up being the main focus of my fieldwork. This school proved to be quite unique from schools and programs in the United States. Run by tax dollars and the Center for Cultural Development (appointed by the city’s municipal government), this school is the city’s central hub for teaching Yucatecan traditional dance. Since 1977, the school has been open and completely free to students, from ages four to ninety-five, to take classes twice a week. The Ballet Folklórico de Mérida was created five years later, becoming a means of public consumption for the regional dance style. It soon became clear that my studies should investigate this dance school and its relationship with the jarana.

In 2003, before my senior year, I was given the opportunity to study abroad for the summer semester, a rare treat since study abroad programs typically run during the traditional fall and spring semesters. I jumped at the opportunity to study in Mérida during a summer semester, which would not create disorder in my university studies and course plan. I had studied Spanish for nine years in high school and college, never having the chance to use it extensively. During this program in Mexico, each student was required to focus on a subject of study regarding the Yucatán. I chose to study pre-Columbian music of the Mayas, the indigenous peoples of the region. I also fell in love
with the nightly musical activities in the main city square. Each Monday night, I would arrive at said location at least an hour beforehand, scoping out the prime seating (I was never the first person there, either!). At nine o’clock sharp, the Ballet dancers of the Ayuntamiento, the city’s municipal government, would perform traditional mestizo dances for locals, foreigners, and Mexican tourists. Tuesday nights, the Parque de Santiago would host Serenatas Yucatecas, a mixed performance of bombas, jarana dancing, the jarana orchestra, and guitar trios. Every night of the week brought a new and exciting feature of Yucatecan culture. When I returned in 2007, I wanted to learn about more recent styles and genres of the Yucatecans.

Very little is written about the Ballet Folklórico de Mérida. Even less is written about the teaching philosophies of educators of Yucatecan folk music and dance. The minimal government and native support is apparent in the dearth of published research. Though the jarana is defined in many sources, there is very little information regarding any other aspects of the musical life of the Yucatán, let alone its dance style and education. I hope to add to the depth of knowledge on this subject matter, instead of simply to its breadth.

There were many problems and issues regarding my study, which took place over nine days, in March 2007. The short time period, in itself, created grandiose problems. While interviewing the dance instructors and heads of the dance groups, I found that the students and adults involved with the school were slow to warm to me. They were unsure of who I was, where I was from, and what, exactly, an ethnomusicologist was. I kept telling them I was a music teacher interested in the school and the students. This
terminology seemed to work better than using the terms “ethnomusicologist” and “thesis.”

On my last day, despite the political problems (see below), the students and parents finally opened up to me, accepting and appreciating my interest in their history and culture. It is a shame that it took until my last day in Mérida to gain the trust and acceptance of the school’s students.

**Bush Invasion, 2007**

Another problem I experienced was a result of the 12 March 2007 night arrival of President George W. Bush. Simply being American, I was quickly targeted as “pro war” and, even worse, possibly “pro Bush’s War on Terror.” Riots (organized by locals, driven by Greenpeace) and protests (which were seen throughout the week prior to the arrival of Bush and Greenpeace) were heavily underway. Protest posters, seen throughout the city (see Figure 3 below), illustrated the nightly events leading up to the arrival of the U.S. president.
The city of over 600,000 was essentially shut down, leaving streets filled with protesters, cars unable to commute, and buses unable to run their routes. The FBI and CIA blocked cell phone usage within the city. The Yucatecan police officers were given riot gear, but their guns were removed by the FBI. Billy sticks were instead provided to them, as were shields and helmets. All officers, no matter their location, donned bulletproof vests.

The tranquil, easygoing locals were frenzied, nervously and angrily pacing the streets. Some families opted to stay in their houses, not allowing their children or other family members to leave. Some schools and after school programs were cancelled.
Though the municipal school remained open, only thirty students showed up to the Friday evening dance classes.

Tourists, American and non-American, were watching the protests, some even participating. News trucks from all over the country, Central America, and even South America filled the streets to document the protests. Shouts of “Tortura Nunca Más” (“Torture No More,” see below) and “Asesinar a Bush” (“Assassinate Bush”) were heard as battle cries.

American flags were burned on the streets and drawings of Bush with devil horns decorated posters, signs, and t-shirts. Toward the end of my stay, I heard that the president visited the sacred ruins of Uxmal. Priests from the local Maya village later came to cleanse the site, to keep away the evils and pollutants Bush carried with himself. Native Mayas who were vendors at the ruins were expelled from their workplace a week proceeding the presidential visit. Families went without wages for a week. Protests around the ruins site were also mentioned in nightly news programs.

Figure 4: Monday Evening Riot Underneath the Municipal Palace
All of this hindered my study, especially on the last day, when only thirty students were able to come into the city. Given the opportunity, I would have spent more time in Mérida to conduct my study. It is quite evident that world politics, even local politics, are enough of a disturbance to a usually tranquil, laid-back city and its people. Suggestions for further research are discussed at the end of Chapter VI.
Yucatán, tierra de aroma, 
tierra de amor y alegría, 
Que al son de tu vaquería 
Arrullas como paloma. 
En tus cenotes se toma 
Agua de puro crystal; 
Tu leyenda y tu ritual 
En mil páginas se pierde 
Y es pendón el oro verde 
Que brilla en tu henequenal.²

Yucatán, land of aroma, 
land of love and happiness, 
That at the sound of your vaquería 
Coos you with a dove 
In your sink holes you drink 
Water crystal pure; 
Your legend and your ritual 
In a thousand pages you get lost 
and is a banner of green gold 
that shines in your fields of henequen.

² Torres, La Bomba Yucateca, 40.
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The *vaquería*

On any given Monday of the year, a crowd of people begin to gather in the *zócalo* (center) of the city at 8:00 p.m., in front of the Municipal Palace. As the dinner period arrives, the city begins to liven. Natives and tourists walk the streets. Horse-drawn buggies and drivers await people interested in a romantic trip around the city. Couples are nestled in the park benches. Birds are still chirping throughout the night sky, reminding the walkers of the trees and soft breezes. Pre-recorded *romances* and Yucatecan *canciones* (songs) begin to be piped through two large speakers by the workers of the Ayuntamiento. The native members of the audience, which has gathered to await the performers, begin singing along. Walking vendors offer peanuts, popcorn, and homemade fried puffs with sauce. Band members arrive, set up their instruments, tune, and socialize. Dancers come fully dressed in their regional costume and wait in the back of the Municipal Palace. Clarinets, saxophones, trumpets, trombones, an auxiliary percussionist, keyboard player, and a trap set player warm up their instruments. Fifty-five minutes later, the crowd is so large that there is only standing room behind the rows of chairs. The police officers cut the flow of traffic in the street and the crowd rushes in, hoping to have a good view of the performance. Three minutes to nine, the crowd begins to clap. As if waiting for the demands of the crowd, the band strikes up and the dancers come flowing out into the street. The crowd bursts with applause and shouts. A collection of regional dances historically performed at the *haciendas* celebrating cattle branding is reenacted for locals and tourists. The *vaquería* has already begun.
Monday
Vaquería – 9:00 p.m.
Bajo del Palacio Municipal – under the Municipal Palace

Tuesday
Remembranzas Musicales (Musical Memories) – 8:30 p.m.
Parque de Santiago – Santiago Park

Wednesday
Various cultural shows and entertainment throughout the city and its cultural centers – 9:00 p.m.
It is recommended to check a copy of “Yucatan Today” for updates and special events

Thursday
Recordar en Vivir (To Remember is to Live) – 4:00 p.m.
Parque Zoológico del Centenario – Centenary Zoo Park

Serenata Yucateca – 9:00 p.m.
Parque de Santa Lucia – Saint Lucia (Lucy) Park

Friday
Noches Románticas en la Ermita (Romantic Nights at the Hermitage) – 9:00 p.m.
Ermita de Santa Isabel – Hermitage of Saint Elizabeth

University Serenade – 9:00 p.m.
Downtown UADY (University Autónoma de Yucatán) building

Saturday
Noche Mexicana (Mexican Night) – 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.
Paseo de Montejo – at the beginning of Montejo Street

En el Corazón de Mérida (In the Heart of Mérida) – 9:00 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Centro Histórico de Mérida – historical center of Mérida

Sunday
Mérida en domingo (Sunday in Mérida) – 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Centro Histórico de Mérida – historical center of Mérida

Vaquería – 1:00 p.m.
Vaquería – 5:00 p.m.
Bajo del Palacio Municipal – under the Municipal Palace

Figure 6: Daily Events in the City of Mérida through the Ayuntamiento³

³ This collection of events is public information, turned into a table for the reader.
Literature Review

The regional dance of the Yucatán, the *jarana*, is a dance combination of the Spanish *jota* and pre-Columbian musical culture. It is the center of attention each night on the streets and in the parks of the capital city of Mérida, Yucatán, México. The grandeur and mystique of this four-hundred-year-old genre is evidenced by the presence of thousands of native and foreign attendees at each performance. The media and tourist industries of the area greatly profit from the *mestizaje* (mixture) of Western musical ideals with an exotic, indigenous twist, making the Ballet Folklórico de Mérida the culturally striking icon of the land. Travelers each year flock to the tropical locale to witness the sunny weather and vivacity of the traditional night life, as well as to experience the best of Mexican cultural tourism.

While basic descriptive information is oftentimes available to the public and researchers alike, in the Yucatán, Mexico, or United States, data on the training of dancers and musicians is lacking. Documented support by the government, state, and city is also not readily available for scholars and the general public. As I conducted this research, I found few sources on issues central to this thesis: the education and financing of this region’s cultural performing arts.

Philip K. Bock conducted a brief survey of the music in Mérida in 1992, incorporating all musical life and events throughout the city. While this does include the *vaquería* with some information on the *jarana*, the article is a brief survey and thus traditions and forms are given only a cursory overview. One source, in particular, has been helpful. Daniel Alfaro’s 1982 dissertation on folk music in the Yucatán Peninsula is

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4 Basic information on the *jarana* is often found within published issues of *Yucatán Today*, the state’s tourist magazine.
also a survey of all the genres and ensembles throughout the multi-state peninsula. A wonderful source for a concise history of the Yucatán, the people, the songs, the dances, and the influences, this dissertation neither addresses the governmental support of the Ayuntamiento, the teaching of the genre to the people of the peninsula, nor the municipal school. Publications on modern cultural tourism, education, and social conditions within the fine arts of Mérida do not exist or are not available in Spanish, Mayan, nor English. The lack of information in these areas requires a need for future research.

It is essential to discuss the development of the jarana, the regional dance of the Yucatán, when approaching the Ballet Folklórico. From pre-Columbian and Western roots, this genre has combined into a state-wide style of music and dance, representing both the native Maya Indians and the colonizing Spaniards of the sixteenth century. To appreciate the non-Western ideals and style, one must turn to the religious mythology and writings of the Maya: the *Popol Vuh* and the *Chilam Balam*. These historical works describe the creation, importance, and usage of song and dance, and include accounts of musical sacrifices, worship, and celebrations.

The historical accounts of the Franciscan monks and other significant settlers, including Fray Diego de Landa, explain the gradual Westernization of the natives. The Spaniards recorded the pre-encounter dance styles, instruments, and musical timbre, as well as the instruction and development of the Western music idiom in the Yucatán, making clear descriptions of past and present musical cultures. Without these accounts

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of the colonial music, song, and dance of the Mayas, we would know almost nothing
about the performing arts of that time.

The jarana is largely ignored in the major source for world music, *The Garland
Encyclopedia of Music*. It is mentioned briefly in the chapter on Mexico under “regional
forms.” There, the author states:

Two other musical regions influenced by the *son*, but not identified by a distinct
kind of *son*, are Yucatán and the northern border area. Regional music of Yucatán
is distinguished by the *jarana* and the *bambuco*. The *jarana* is a couple dance
resembling the Spanish *jota* in its choreography and the meter of its music. The
*jarana* is performed instrumentally, most often by a small orchestra of wind and
percussion instruments, and has no text, excepting occasional brief breaks, when a
dancer declaims a *copla*.10

Other information on Yucatecan music in the encyclopedia is found in the Central
American segment “Nations and Musical Traditions” under “Maya.” Linda O’Brien-
Rothe spends little time discussing Yucatecan Maya traditions and even fewer lines on
the combined influences of the Mayas and the Spaniards from the onset of the colonial
period to the present day.11

**Musicking in Mèrida**

Christopher Small, in *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*,
introduces modern questions and angles on the Western performance and perception of

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music. Small declares that music within the Western culture is not what we consider it to be.

Music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do. The apparent thing “music” is a figment, an abstraction of the action, whose reality vanishes as soon as we examine it closely.

Small asserts that there are many problems with how we look at music and its meaning in the Western musical tradition. To Small, “What is music?” is not a legitimate question. He strongly states that the musical performance is not the art, but rather a method of transporting music. Musicians have taken the music out of the process of non-professionals participating in the event. This has created a skeletal form of empty and meaningless music. Musicians do not give meaning to the music in a performance, nor is the performance a perfect representation of the composer’s wishes. The performance only provides the audience with a one-way road from the mind of the composer, which bled onto the manuscript paper, to the audience, without any reciprocation or community involvement. Thus, Small argues that the process of making music should be more important than the performance.

According to Small, the term “music” is not a satisfactory method of describing the musical process. He invented the term “musicking” to describe the actions of the noun (music). As a verb, he argues that the presence and importance of the actions and processes are then able to stand on their own, becoming more meaningful. Musicking is explained in this context:

13 Ibid., 2.
1. “to perform” or “to make music.”

2. To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing.⁴⁴

In short, music and all activities surrounding the event become one. This includes the composition of the work, rehearsal, individual practicing, audience participation, listening, and reaction. The stage set-up, maintenance, librarians, and publicists all work together to create a musical experience. “My purpose,” Small writes, “is to propose a framework for understanding all musicking as a human activity, to understand not just how but why taking part in a musical performance acts in such complex ways on our existence as individual, social and political beings.”⁴⁵

Musicking seems to be an appropriate theory to apply to the Municipal School of Regional Folklore, which has been involved in all aspects of performing arts. Not only has the school been maintained for thirty years, it has also been the main source of artists for the Ballet Folklórico de Mérida.

The Ayuntamiento (a branch of the city’s municipal government) has supported the program for years, allowing students of all ages, social standing, and income to take classes for the sheer enjoyment of the dance and music. Parents, relatives, extended family, and friends come to the school to wait for their loved one to finish their classes. The end of the year (around June) is filled with an exciting dance program, showing off what the students have learned. For those students who have worked diligently and show

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⁴⁴ Ibid., 9.
⁴⁵ Ibid., 12.
potential, they may be offered a spot in the Ballet Folklórico and a small stipend to cover the cost of transportation to the Ballet’s rehearsals and performances.

The teachers, director, secretary, security guard, and custodian at the school are all paid for their duties through the Ayuntamiento, which also pays the rent for the school building and covers the costs of the technical crew, the staging crew, the directors of the Ballets, as well as the band, the announcer, the poet, and the cleaning crew for the outdoor performance locations. Depending on the day of the week and the performance, up to seventy people will be responsible for setting up and striking a performance.

Through the taxes on the Yucatecans, the Ayuntamiento is able to outfit the Ballet Folklórico in their costumes, which includes shoes, sandals, dresses, shirts and pants, necklaces, rebosos (traditional shawls), huipiles (traditional embroidered dresses), hair pieces, earrings, bandanas, fruit baskets, beverage trays, boxes, hats, and sashes that say “Ayuntamiento de Mérida.” The only cost to the performer is the bordered collar of the women’s costume. Traditionally hand made, though also made by sewing machine, these collars can be very costly; for an adult, one may come to over $300, or $3,000 Pesos.

In addition to the band and the dancers, many other people and outlets are necessary for the musicking process. For promotion, local papers and travel magazines announce the nightly performances of the Ballet Folklórico de Mérida; tourist information centers give information on the time and location of these performances; and websites regarding culture, tourism, history, and demographics also provide photographs of the performers.

Through these many connections, we are able to verify the importance of the multi-faceted and intricately woven relationship between the Municipal School of
Regional Folklore and the Ballet Folklórico de Mérida. Without each other, neither would exist. Without the taxpayers, the Secretary of Cultural Development, the periodicals, and the natives and tourists alike, music and dance would not be as well known, developed, or economically beneficial as they are today. Without this intricate web of relationships, the entire tourist and social economy of Mérida would suffer greatly.
Figure 7: Ballet Folklórico Dancers Dancing “La Mestiza”

Cuando tú estás zapateando
con ritmo tan lindo y tierno,
parece que estás bordando
con los pies tu lindo terno
¡Señores! Qué ha sucedido,
que tienen los tocadores
qué me han dejado en silencio
en medio de tantas flores.¹⁶

When you are dancing
with rhythm so pretty and tender,
it seems that you are embroidering
with your feet your pretty attire (huipile)
Sirs! What has happened,
that you have the players
that have left me in silence
in middle of so many flowers.

¹⁶Torres, La Bomba Yucateca, 45.
CHAPTER II. HISTORY OF THE YUCATÁN

Geographically, the Yucatán Peninsula includes the Mexican states of Quintana Roo, Campeche, and Yucatán state as well as the northern regions of Belize and Guatemala. In pre-Columbian times, Yucatán was the home to the Mayas, considered to be the most advanced civilization of their time. Throughout the years, this region and its people have cultivated a rich musical tradition, incorporating indigenous, Spanish, and other Western elements and instruments to its palette.

Figure 8: Map of the Yucatán Peninsula

http://www.travelyucatan.com/yucatan-peninsula-map-only.htm
Pre-Columbian Period

From 200 BCE to 900 CE, the Maya civilization thrived in southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, and parts of Honduras. It is believed that they entered North America via a land bridge from Asia around 11,000 BCE and began migrating south. The Maya ancestors settled around 2,000 BCE from their nomadic lives.\(^{17}\) Living in towns and villages, they grew maize, cultivated the lands, and created a profitable trade empire by producing highly-ornamented dresses and garments. These people were intelligent astronomers, mathematicians, writers, warriors, and craftspeople. As they settled in the region, they began developing weapons as well as tools for agriculture. Hieroglyphic writing flourished, as did their mathematic system, which was based on the number twenty. The Mayas had two calendars: a ritual calendar of 260 days and a civil calendar of 365 days, composed of eighteen months, each with twenty days.\(^{18}\)

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 650-652.
As the population flourished, the Maya culture developed and settled in cities. They developed governments and commerce, constructed spiritual dwellings, and set up extensive artisan and agricultural trade routes. Uxmal and Chichén Itzá became important centers for commerce, government, and religion, and were connected through the trade routes.
Popol Vuh

After 900 CE, there were only two remaining large populations of the Mayas: one in the highlands of Guatemala, the other in northern Yucatán. The Popol Vuh is a council book of the Quiché people from the highlands of Guatemala. Though it came from outside the northern Yucatán peninsula, the book’s influence stretched throughout the region. Today, the Mayas re-enact excerpts from the Popol Vuh at the ruin sites of Uxmal and other villages. The book has been adapted into the lowland Mayas’ culture and history. A collection of stories, the Popol Vuh describes the creation of the world and its people. Stories of the gods’ plight and plunder are accounted, as are musical references, throughout the book. The deep religious and godly sentiments of music are discussed and the importance of music in religious ceremonies, rites, rituals, magic, and civil events is briefly mentioned.

The Popol Vuh was passed down orally until the eighteenth century. Many of the Mayas feared the complete annihilation of their culture under colonial rule. Fearing the loss of their history and religion, it was anonymously written in manuscript form. This document, originally composed in Mayan and later translated into Spanish, contains many stories about one family and three sets of twins: One Monkey and One Artisan, Hunbatz and Hunchoven, and Hunahpú and Xbalanque. These groups of artistic twin siblings are described spending the majority of their days playing the flute, singing, painting, and carving.

The *Popol Vuh* contains an excerpt describing the magical scene of Hunahpu and Xbalanque turning their brothers, One Monkey and One Artisan, into tree-dwelling monkeys out of jealousy of their musical talents. Music was a pleasure and aural delicacy, a means of worshipping the gods, as well a method of recording history in song.

And then they began playing. They played “Hunahpu Monkey”… And then they sang, they played, they drummed. When they took up their flutes and drums…then they played, they sounded out the tune, the song that got its name then. “Hunahpu Monkey” is the name of the tune. And then One Monkey and One Artisan came back, dancing when they arrived.

It is during this account that the music reverts the freshly-turned monkeys back into the brothers as a result of the demands of their grandmother. Music makes them dance (as it does the Mayas), without any understanding. Some believe that music was used for signaling and for communication between villages and neighboring tribes. For example, drums, some whose sound could carry as far as two miles, were often found in ancient ruins, towards the top of the tallest temple. Mexican archaeologists believe them to have been used for communication.22

Gifts of peace, from the highest class of people, to the gods are described in the *Popol Vuh*. The gifts include a bone flute, bird whistle, and a bracelet of rattling snail shells.23 As signs of wealth and social status, items such as these are considered luxuries.

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22 I was informed of this possibility during by archaeologist Alberto Pérez de la Cruz, Professor of Archaeology, from the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY). This theory is being further investigated by undergraduate archaeology students from the university.

23 *Popol Vuh*, 204.
to the highest class. Because of the correlation between the instruments and the gods, Hunbatz and Hunchoven asked the Mayas to play music for them.

Instruments had a special importance to the Mayas. This is evident in the *Popol Vuh* as well as in *El libro de los libros de Chilam Balam*. Instruments were made from wood, bone, stone, and any other naturally occurring element. Further descriptions of pre-Columbian musical instruments are provided in Appendix I.

*El Libro de los libros de Chilam Balam*

*El Libro de los libros de Chilam Balam*, written by the high priest, Chilam Balam, is another book of prophesies and histories. The text gives us bits and pieces of the history and culture of the people and includes descriptions of the practice of astronomy, mathematics (the Maya calendar), the creation of the world, and the assent to power of the chieftains of the Yucatán.

We are told in the *Chilam Balam* that prophesies were sometimes sung to the people. Included in the prophetic book is “A Song of the Itzá,” from which we can speculate on a structure:

Ho! What is so precious as we are? It is the precious jewel <worn on the breast.>

Ho! What is the distinction of righteous men? It is my mantle, my loin-cloth. So spoke the god. Then do you mourn for anyone? No one. A tender boy was I at Chichen, when the evil man, the master of the army, came to seize the land. Woe! At Chichen Itzá heresy was favored! *Yulu uayano!*

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Ho! 1 Imix was the day when the ruler was seized at Chikin-chén. Ho! Where thou art, there is the god. Ho! 1 Imix was the day he said this. At Chichen Itzá heresy was favored! Yulu uayano! Buried, buried! This was their cry. Buried, buried! This they also knew…This also was their cry on that first day of Yaxkin, that mighty day, 2 Akbal, they came. Woe! Woe! Woe! Yulu uayano! Is there perhaps anyone who by chance has awakened? Force was brought to bear for the second time. Woe! For the third time was established the religious festival of our enemies, our enemies. Uuiyao! Soon it will come to Chichen Itzá, <where> heresy was favored. Yulu uayano! <In> the third heaven is the sun. Behold!

Whom am I said to be among men? I am a leafy covering. Eya! Who am I among the people of Putun? You do not understand me! Eya! I was created in the night. What were we born? Eya! We were <like> tame animals <to> Mizcit Ahau. <But> an end comes to his roguery. Behold, so I remember my song. Heresy was favored. Yulu uayano! Eya! I die, he said, because of the town festival. Eya! I shall come, he said, because of the destruction of the town. This is the end <of what is> in his mind, of what he thought in his heart. Me, he did not destroy. I tell what I have remembered in my song. Heresy was favored. Yulu uayano!

This is the entire song, and the completion of the message of the Maya Lord God.26 A musical form seems to stand out in these lyrics. “At Chichen Itzá heresy was favored!” appears to be the refrain of the song. “Eya!,” “Ho!,” and “Yulu uayano!” are found with regularity, possibly creating a rhyming scheme or creating rhyming strophes. Laments of prophesies seem to have been key genres, and singing these had a vital

26 Ibid., 114-116.
function for the Mayas. The structure and meaning of the text are quite important in the realization of the music. Sung prophesies and stories seemed to be an important element of the Maya culture.

Among the Mexicans the jaguar was the strong and brave animal par conventional designation and brave warriors. The coyote was regarded in a two-fold aspect. He was the god of singing and dancing, but as a beast of prey he was also a symbol of the warrior. Certain outstanding warriors appeared both at dances and in battle clothed in a garment representing the coyote.\textsuperscript{27}

Other parts of the \textit{Chilam Balam} reveal the many gods of music. In addition to human deities, animal deities have religious, spiritual, and musical connotations, demonstrating again the link between Maya performing arts within the animal world. Animal deities are seen engraved in membranophones. Aerophones made from clay or wood are often carved to represent animals. Further information on pre-Columbian instruments as well as indigenous dances may be found in Appendix I.

\textbf{Colonization Period}

It was about this time, very early in the century, that Chilam Balam, a prophet-priest in northern Yucatan, prophesied the invasion of the peninsula by bearded strangers who were perhaps the emissaries of the self-exiled culture hero Kukul Can, the Feathered Serpent.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 199.
\textsuperscript{28} Inga Clendinnen, \textit{Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4.
Not knowing if the newcomers were friends or enemies, the Mayas decided to test their invaders. Below is an excerpt describing the attack of the Mayas.

Then, as they drew level with some brush-covered hillocks the chief shouted, and Indian warriors, crested and painted, bodies swathed in quilted cotton armour, and armed with stones, bows and arrows, and flint-studded lances, leapt from hiding and attacked. The first flight of arrows wounded 13 Spaniards.\textsuperscript{29}

After Columbus’ 1492 encounter with the Americas, many Europeans began to sail to and settle in the New World. Explorers began searching the lands. Many Spaniards lost their lives in the Yucatán. Some, though, were more welcome than others. In the year 1517, the mixing of Spaniards and natives in Mérida became official. Gonzalo Guerrero (Figure 10) is considered the Father of the Mestizo (mixed race). Shipwrecked and greeted by the Mayas, Guerrero lived among the natives in peace.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 7.
Fray Diego de Landa, in 1566, recounted the horrors of an unpleasant welcome. He was to become one of the most influential Mayan-speaking immigrants in the Yucatán through his patience and kindness towards the natives. It is from the Franciscans and other written Spanish accounts that we have early accounts of the Mayas. Though these were written at the decline of the civilization, one may discover the power of the music.

Then the Spaniards heard for the first time a sound they were to learn to dread; the high whistling of Maya warriors on the attack. But no attack came. Despite the
whistling, despite the thump of drums and the blasting moan of the conch-shell
trumpets, the warriors held their ranks.\textsuperscript{30}

Many Mayas were converting to Christianity with the help of the missionaries. Despite
the fact that it was punishable by death, some held firmly to their original religious
doctrines and polytheistic life.

\textbf{Francisco de Montejo and the Founding of Mérida}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{francisco-de-montejo-and-his-son-and-nephew.png}
\caption{Francisco de Montejo, his Son and Nephew}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 10.
Francisco de Montejo, along with his son and nephew, began working for Spain in the New World. They had successful adventures and conquests of Tenochtitlán (present-day Mexico City), Cuba, and Panama. Winning favor with many of the military leaders of the region, Montejo found himself with power, money, and men. He moved quickly to the Yucatán, which was still believed to be an island. It was a perfect location with vast wealth, riches, and possibilities as a port halfway between the Indies and Europe. Montejo jumped to settle the lands. The area was divided up between his commanding officers. At that time, many natives were still uninterested in converting to Christianity. The land that was eventually settled, in 1542 by Montejo, had been called T’hó by the Mayas.

Above the ruins of T’hó, Montejo founded the capital city of Mérida on 6 January 1542. Mérida was a possession of Spain for three hundred years. All of the peoples of the land attempted to live together the best they could. Spanish government was established with rule under the governor of the city and the military general. As the Mayas were converted and the Spaniards took advantage of the tropical climate and rich agricultural seasons, the economy began to boom. Henequen, cotton, honey, beans, corn, and fruits were exported. Mayan and Spanish were spoken regularly; oftentimes, to facilitate communication, members of one culture attempted to learn the other’s language. The Franciscan Friars, wanting to convert the natives, ended up learning much of the Mayan language.

32 Ibid., 19.
The Franciscan monks were the only Western religious influence on the Mayas during colonization. After studying the language and culture, they began regretting the forced enculturation of the Mayas. Fray Diego de Landa, Bishop of the Yucatán Peninsula, later became remorseful for his deliberate elimination, in many cases, of the traditional Maya lifestyle. The music, songs, language, and culture had been impacted. The great feasts of the lineages with their ‘drunkenness and disorder’; the dancing in the evenings where ‘dirty things of their pagan days’ might be sung; all these were forbidden.  

In 1562, the Idolatry Inquisition began. Catholic priests and Bishops began searching for “unfaithfully” Catholic natives. These “unfaithful” natives were accused of still worshipping Maya deities. Over 4500 natives were tortured, and over 158 died from 

33 Chilam Balam, Roys, 46.
34 Ibid., 57-8.
interrogations. Thirteen natives were known to have committed suicide to avoid the torture; eighteen others disappeared.\footnote{Ibid., 76.}

In 1556, Fray Diego de Landa, Bishop of the Yucatán Peninsula, wrote an ethnological treatise on the Yucatán. He was Bishop from 1571-1579. Fluent in Mayan, de Landa focused on converting the natives with a gentle ease. Using dance as a method of religious conversion, Western genres and styles were encouraged.\footnote{David Rojas, “Danzas de Mexico.” (Accessed 13 February 2006) \url{http://www.folklorico.com/>} Appreciated as a gentle man to the natives, de Landa’s work represented a successful step for the Spanish Empire.

After returning to Spain, de Landa began feeling remorseful for destroying much of the remaining culture of the Mayas. To make amends, de Landa decided to use his daily journal from his trip to write a set of memoirs of the ancient Maya culture he had assisted in dismantling. His An Account of the Things of the Yucatan is a very thorough book on the ancient traditions of the Yucatecan natives. Describing the secular and religious lives of the people, his work maintained much of the lost heritage.\footnote{Diego de Landa, Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán, 9-19.}

Independent Yucatán

By the 1800s, the local people of Mexico became restless. Exhausted by the domination of the Spanish, and unable to organize their own government or be recognized as natives (Mayas) or mestizos (mixed races), local desires arose to confront the government. By 16 September 1810, revolution began. A priest, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, irate at the refusal of equality and justice, became the father of the fight for independence, and began the revolution that continued after his death. José María
Morelos y Pavón took over as leader, continuing the eleven years of battle. A treatise, called The Three Guarantees, was proposed to end the war. These three sought-after guarantees were freedom of religion, independence, and union of the peoples.\textsuperscript{38} Independence was granted to Mexico in 1821.

Yucatán followed in the pursuit of independence. A group known as the Sanjuanistas, named after their meeting place, the San Juan Church of Mérida, united to fight for an independent Yucatán. Father Vicente María Velázquez, Lorenzo de Zavala, José Francisco Bates, and Matías Quintana were some of the leaders of the movement. Many fought for more independence; others fought to reunite the Mayas with their sacred lands, yet another argument was for economic development and class equality regarding politics. Yucatán gained independence on 15 September 1821.\textsuperscript{39}

This short period brought economic prosperity to the lands. The government became the Congreso Constituyente; however, the congress was dissolved later by the declared emperor of Mexico, Agustín de Iturbide. By 1824, just three years after Yucatán’s independence, a new constitution was set up within the entire country of Mexico. It became the Federal Republic of the United Mexican States.\textsuperscript{40}

By 1835, the centralist government overtook Mexico. Attempting to govern the Yucatán, the centralists enforced heavy taxation on commercial goods and encouraged men to fight against Texas, which separated from Mexico. Four years later, Yucatecan forces overtook the centralists in a revolt and declared the peninsula free from the Mexican government. The Yucatecans signed a treaty after this victory, recognizing the centralist government, though controlling their own commercial businesses and local

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 110-111.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 112-113.
government. The centralist forces did not approve of this, causing a schism in 1846, and Yucatán once again begrudgingly reunited with the country; peace did not last long, however. On 30 June 1847, native Mayas revolted against the aristocratic class of the Yucatán. Frustrated with their wages, treatment, and the exploitation of their people, a war of the castes ensued. The Treaties of Tzucacab ended the strife momentarily. Rights of baptism and marriage were made more lenient, native Maya houses and lands were saved, and separate Yucatecan and Maya governors, Miguel Barbachano and Jacinto Pat, respectively, were appointed.41

Yucatecan life, for Mayas, *mestizos*, and Spanish citizens was quiet. The year 1848 brought the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ceding the northern Mexican lands to the United States. In 1901, the Yucatán was shaken out of its semi-quiet period of prosperity and happiness. France, under the rule of Maximilian of Hapsburg, began to invade. Benito Juárez, the true president of Mexico, was supported by the liberals, whereas the conservative citizens supported the European invasion of power. On 16 June 1867, Mexico ousted the aristocratic rule of the Hapsburg Empire.42

**El Porfiriato**

After many years of political inquietude, Yucatán prospered with its henequen empire. Set up similarly to a southern American slave plantation, *hacienda* (land) owners employed workers to run their fiber plants, but reaped the profits while the employees barely treaded above the poverty line and were unable to leave the plantation or to lead a healthy and happy free life. Pay was low, morale was even lower. When Porfirio Díaz

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41 Ibid., 114-117.
42 Ibid., 116-119.
entered the Yucatecan government as a military liberal, the higher social classes prospered further. This period is known as “El Porfiriato,” the Porfirio Period. Desiring to keep profits high, foreign employment arrived from China and other parts of Asia. One positive development of this period of oppression was the creation of schools, parks, hospitals, railroads, streets, and cities.\(^{43}\) Political seats and personnel in the Yucatán changed many times during this period, until the beginning of the twentieth century, though without much tension or political uprisings.

La Revolución to Yucatán Today

Another movement of independence surged throughout the country on 20 November 1910. In the Yucatan Francisco I. Madero led the resistance against the power of Yucatecan governor, Porfirio Díaz, José María Pino Suárez took over as the Mexican republic’s vice president. Madero and Pino Suárez were assassinated quickly. Cámara Vales then replaced Pino Suárez.\(^ {44}\)

War fever seemed to take over the country. To the north, the Mexican Revolution was strong. Venustiano Carranza led the forces. In the southern portion of the Yucatán Peninsula, Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa were waging war against repression for human rights. General Salvador Alvarado was appointed governor and military commander of the Yucatán in 1915.\(^ {45}\) The Zapatista party, initiated by Zapata, is still

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 124-126.
\(^{44}\) Ibid., 134-135.
\(^{45}\) Ibid., 136-137.
popular today, led by the infamous and brave leader, Marco, standing up against oppression of the people of Chiapas and the Yucatán.\textsuperscript{46}

Alvarado governed the Yucatán Peninsula from 1915 to 1918. This period is remembered as one of prosperity and riches. Laws were passed in support of the common people, and henequen production and profit skyrocketed. The period did not last long, because socialist party member Carlos Castro Morales was elected governor, and soon, the people were searching again for help and a new leader.\textsuperscript{47} In 1918, the henequen prosperity began to dwindle, as the prosperous times were declining and people stopped working in the \textit{haciendas}. \textsuperscript{48} Felipe Carillo Puerto was elected governor of the Yucatán in 1921. Though Carillo Puerto was opposed to the \textit{hacienda} system, he worked diligently to remedy the economic situation as the henequen industry ran dry.

With an attempt to move in another direction, Puerto began to focus on the importance of Maya culture. The sacred ruins of Chichén Itzá were reconstructed. Anthropologists, archaeologists, and other scientists were invited to study the history and culture of the native inhabitants. Carillo Puerto also began encouraging pride in the people’s indigenous origins. An equally important surge for women’s equality and importance occurred at the same time.\textsuperscript{49}

Carillo Puerto stood against the \textit{haciendas} and henequen movement. Though he attempted to remedy the economic disaster, he was overruled by the \textit{hacienda jefes}

\textsuperscript{46} It should also be noted that the Zapatista party was present during the days of protest before the arrival of President George W. Bush to Mérida. The Zapatista party, often covering their face with masks to conceal their identities, passed out pamphlets, held protests, and made and posted signs opposing the genocidal nature of the American president.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 138-139.
\textsuperscript{48} Henequen is the fibrous material stripped from the agave cactus. It was one of many items mass produced on the landowner's \textit{haciendas}, or plantations. The landowners were wealthy members of the upper class, who employed members of the lowest classes and enslaved them to the lands and productions.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 138-139.
(hacienda bosses/owners), who, with the assistance of military power, threw him out of office. He was taken prisoner and exiled on 3 January 1924.\textsuperscript{50}

Agrarian reform became the focus of the peninsula. In 1936, President Lázaro Cárdenas founded the Banco Nacional de Crédito Ejidal, a national bank focused on cultivating and selling the henequen products. Henequen production then blossomed.\textsuperscript{51} The products were sold within the community, the country, and around the world. Synthetic fibers and cheaper production wages and prices throughout the world slowly began to overtake the henequen industry. Though henequen production declined, the movement to modern times does not conclude with misery; rather it shows an increase in the road systems, rail systems, city buildings, parks, and neighborhoods throughout the peninsula.\textsuperscript{52}

Today, the Yucatán Peninsula has a steady economy of producing tortillas, fruits, and drinks (including forms of tequila), as well as tourism and restaurants filled with regional foods, sweets and crafts. Tourists visit the artisan stores, museums, haciendas (both working and tourist), ruin sites, and cultural performances throughout the peninsula. Cultural performances are filled with the regional dance, the jarana, local music of trovas or serenades, and local composers and performers, engaging both Western Art Music and regional styles.\textsuperscript{53}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[50] Ibid., 138-139.
\item[51] Ibid., 140-141.
\item[52] The henequen production is minimal throughout the Yucatán today. Most haciendas have been shut down, burned down, or turned into museums for tourists and school children. Some of the largest and most prosperous haciendas have been turned into hotels and restaurants, such as the ever-famous Hacienda Yaxcopoil, Hacienda Petac, and the Hacienda Teya.
\item[53] Carmen Ligia Mendoza Escobedo, Yucatán, 152-153.
\end{footnotes}
Mesticita primorosa,
quisiera ser rojo pétalo
de esa flor con que engalanas
tus negrísimos cabellos,
para estar muy pegadito
al cráneo y a tu cerebro,
y espillar muy complacido
¡dónde van tus pensamientos!...

Exquisite mestiza,
I would want to be a red petal
on this flower that adorns
your very black hair,
to be very close
to your skull and your brain,
and to spy very pleased
where your thoughts go!

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54 Torres, *La Bomba Yucateca*, 49.
CHAPTER III. THE JARANA AND THE VAQUERÍA

Description

Little published information is available regarding the jarana and the vaquería. Ethnomusicological sources, such as the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* (Vol. 2) briefly mention the regional jarana, while mostly focusing on other aspects and areas of Latin, Mexican, and indigenous music. Other authors state only that

Creating a second class citizenship, these people took to merging the traditional cultures with the Spanish western traditions, mainly the *jota* to create the Yucatecan style, the *jarana*. A rapid dance in three-four with staccato castanet playing, the *jarana* makes for rapid choreography…

Dance became the unifying element to their heritage as well as the principle [sic] presentation of artistic culture of the Yucatán.

Past Studies

Daniel Alfaro, in his 1982 dissertation entitled *Folk Music of the Yucatán Peninsula*, created a much broader description and depth of information regarding the jarana and the vaquería.

…the *jarana de Yucatan*, epitomizes the folk music and dance traditions of the Yucatan region. The *jarana* is the most beloved folk dance of the people of the Yucatan peninsula. It is the national folk dance of this region and is performed

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exclusively throughout the peninsula, with the exception of the times when it is featured in special programs outside the region…

*Jaranas* are danced at every fiesta in every part of Yucatan, whether a social gathering (as in private homes), in village squares in remote areas as part of sacred or secular ceremonies, or at large, well-organized municipal events. Every man, woman and child of the peninsula has some knowledge of its music and dance steps and can relate in some way to the *jarana’s* rich heritage.\(^{57}\)

Looking deeper into the meaning and significance of the *jarana*, Alfaro presents much more information on the social aspects of this dance. He describes the *jarana’s* origin as deriving from the Spanish *jota*, which in turn originated in the Spanish provinces of Aragon and Navarre. He acknowledges, however, that the *jota* may be Greek, Moorish, or Arabic.\(^{58}\)

The music for the *jota* is a simple, lively melody with harmonies that are mostly dominant and tonic. The dance is in a lively 3/8 meter, with a tendency to accent the last beat of the measure.\(^{59}\)

Both the *jota* and the *jarana* are rondo forms, with the main melody frequently repeating. Other common characteristics are the vivacious tempi, the intricate heel tapping, clicking of shoe heels, and the constant grace and control of the dancers.\(^{60}\)

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\(^{57}\) Alfaro, *Folk Music of the Yucatan Peninsula*, 207-208.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 184.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 184.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 184.
The *jarana* is performed at the *vaquería*, translated as a herd of cattle. While most *vaquerías* do not contain cattle, the association remains historically entwined with the festivals of farmers branding cattle. Traditionally, the *hacienda* owners and workers would plan a party to celebrate the branding. Food, drink, music, and dancing were present; dancing and music-making occurred until dawn. Alfaro explains that once the cattle period of the *haciendas* was turned over to henequen production, the party remained essential to the morale of the people, creating a regional custom.\(^\text{61}\)

The *jarana* is a courtship dance symbolizing the pursuit of women by men and is therefore intended to be danced by couples. The numbers of couples that participate in the dance will vary, since no specific number is required. The couples dance facing one another at respectful distances.\(^\text{62}\)

Alfaro describes the apparel worn by men and women. Women wear bright, embroidered *huipiles*, or petticoats (usually two), with lace on the edge, along with gold necklaces, earrings, and low-heeled shoes. Men, on the other hand, wear white pants and a white shirt with a Mandarin collar (a stand-up collar), as well as *huaraches*, or sandals. They complete the outfit with a Panama hat and red scarf, usually folded into the pants at the waist.\(^\text{63}\)

The dance steps are called *zapateados*, or *pasos*. The dancer focuses on the intricate dance steps of the *jarana*, while maintaining an erect upper body position. The hands of the male may be intertwined behind their backs or at their side. The female dancers will hold their dress out, as if to curtsy, or hold their *huipile* (see Figure 5). Both

\(^\text{61}\) Ibid., 288-289.
\(^\text{62}\) Ibid., 293.
\(^\text{63}\) Ibid., 292.
male and female dancers may also hold their hands and arms up in the air, in a ninety-degree angle, with their elbows bent (see Figure 12). Dancers will snap their fingers with the music, or place their fingers together, as if playing castanets.\textsuperscript{64}

Customs associated with the modern \textit{jarana} include bottle dances, where a beer bottle is filled with water and placed on the dancers’ heads while they dance. Male and female dancers will also place drink trays, with four glasses and a beer bottle (in the center), on their heads. All items are filled with water (see Figure 20). The dancers’ grace, talent, and elegance keep their trays, glasses, and bottles intact. Spinning choreography creates an even more difficult and dangerous scenario for the bottles and glasses. A small wooden box is often used, in addition to the single beer bottle or tray of beverages, to increase difficulty of the \textit{zapateados} (see Figure 22). Female dancers may also carry a basket of flowers or vegetables in certain dances, expressing augmented femininity (see Figure 7). A scarf, used as a prop and visual aid for the audience, may also be used in certain dances (see Figure 23). A Maypole dance has become an important event and dance during the \textit{vaquería} as well (see Figure 13). Colored ribbons are danced around the pole, creating intricate patterns.

\textbf{The Bomba}

One of the most distinguishing customs which combines poetry with the music and dance is the \textit{bomba} associated with the \textit{jarana}. \textit{Bombas} are related to the Spanish \textit{coplas}... which found their way to the peninsula during the last part of the Colonial period. Like the \textit{copla}, the \textit{bomba} is a four-line verse generally consisting of eight syllables per line with the second and fourth lines rhyming.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 294-295.
The subjects of the text of the bombas are primarily humorous, coquettish, risqué (bombas picantes), and romantic.\textsuperscript{65}

Although Alfaro states that these unaccompanied bombas are four-line verses, many bombas are longer. They are also traditionally spoken in small, intimate settings, though have grown to the ears of larger audiences.\textsuperscript{66} Bombas have become popular aspects of the vaquería, breaking up the dance numbers and allowing the orchestra (if there is a live ensemble) and dancers to rest a moment and prepare for the next dance. Though they do not directly relate to the jarana and its music, they are an essential element of the vaquería (see Figure 2) and provide the inclusion of poetry and jokes into the event. Bombas are not taught or used in the school setting.

While Alfaro offers many excellent descriptions and definitions of the vaquería and the jarana, the instructors from the municipal school agreed upon extended definitions that delved into deeper meaning and significance for the Yucatecans.

The Instructors’ Views

Each instructor shared with me their beliefs and feelings of the jarana as well as the traditions of their culture and history (see Appendix IV for instructor biographies). Since there are no courses in Mérida dedicated to licensure in folkloric dance, it is ever so essential for the instructors to be strong pillars of education. The traditions and dance

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 295-296.

\textsuperscript{66} One may find well-known bombas throughout this thesis on the page preceding each chapter. Some bombas follow the more traditional, four-line method, while others have grown much longer. Today, bombas are heard throughout the Monday night vaquería in the presence of thousands of spectators. They are no longer seen, in a large city setting, as intimate and poetic sentiments from the dancers. The poet, Sergio, now performs dramatic reenactments of bombas for the crowds, much to their pleasure. The majority of the bombas in this thesis are more than four lines. It is possible that the popularity of bombas is regional.
steps remain in their memory. Their decisions and actions are the essential elements of the future of the *jarana*.

María Concepción Echeverría is proud that so many geriatric citizens participate in the municipal school’s classes. She believes that many geriatrics dance the *jarana* as a form of therapy, and that people come to relax, enjoy their time, and rid themselves of rheumatoid arthritis or other sicknesses. The movements have a healing benefit for them. It is also good for the heart. People also dance the *jarana* because they love the music and enjoy dancing.\(^{67}\)

Yamile Ivette Miranda Montañez believes that learning the *jarana* is essential to the retention of the Yucatecan culture. All Yucatecans, young and old, have the opportunity to preserve the dance. She even encourages students to learn Mayan. She believes that so many students are interested in taking the classes because the traditions are deeply embedded in the culture and they recognize that the *jarana* is them. She says “If you are *mestiza*, you should dance!” She adds that “the *jarana* is US.” She enjoys when foreign visitors come to the school and take an interest in Yucatecan culture and history. Yamile asserts that the *jarana* only has two real dance steps. The trick of the genre is the combination of the steps with the two time signatures: 3/4 and 6/8. She shared that each dance has its own special significance in the history and culture of the people.\(^{68}\)

Guadalupe Parra reveals that it is most important to keep the culture of the dance alive. The *jarana* is the most representative thing Yucatecans have. Thankfully, the school is dedicated to keeping the tradition alive for the Spaniards, *mestizos*, and Mayas.

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\(^{67}\) María Concepción Echeverría, in discussion with the author, 7 March 2007.

\(^{68}\) Yamile Ivette Miranda Montañez, in discussion with the author, 9 March 2007.
of the Yucatán. She adds that though many people do not know the dances or know why the Yucatecans dance the *jarana*, the beautiful dances in the *vaquería* are performed by the people and they should know what the dances all mean, historically and culturally. The arms of the dancers are held above the head because people carry the corn in baskets, braced by their hands. She says, however, that the arms of the Mayas never really moved in dance during pre-Columbian times. Any arm movement derives from Spanish influence. Dancers’ arms will also be set in the form of a cross while the performers dance.  

Renan Andres Chan Flores reveals that the beer bottles so often seen on dancers’ heads traditionally came form a local brewery in Mérida. Since it has closed, many students must turn to other beer bottles, or even pop bottles, finding the widest bottle possible in order to keep it balanced as much as possible on their heads. The dance steps, according to Renan, “speak” the history of the festivals and the dances. The majority of the people do not know the entire sequence of steps. Depending on the city and the people, the dances may slightly differ from city to city.

In the larger picture, it is indeed the teachers who retain the traditions. Their lessons, methods of instruction, and curriculum decisions are essential to uphold the dance style and traditions in Mérida. The instructors become the tradition itself. For this reason, their information and knowledge is essential to the research of the *jarana* and even the *vaquería*. 

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69 Guadalupe Parra, in discussion with the author, 8 March 2007.  
70 Renan Andres Chan Flores, in discussion with the author, 12 March 2007.
Description of a Bootlegged Source

Upon asking many of the school’s teachers about the history and significance of the *jarana*, some began to refer to an old book that contained plentiful information. It was Profesora María Concepción Echeverría who offered to bring me this information in order to assist with my research. She came to the school with both a third grade book on the history of the Yucatán peninsula and photocopies from the old, bootlegged book. These photocopies described the *vaquería*, the *jarana*, and the cultural and historical meanings of some of the well-known and often-performed dances in the school and at the *vaquería*.

The title, date, and publisher of this work are unknown. I have been informed by the professors María and Renan that this is the only true written source regarding the *jarana* that they have ever known. I was informed that it was no longer published and that nothing else like it existed. The full text and its translation can be found in Appendix II. Non-translated descriptions of some of the *zapateado* (dance) steps are also found in Appendix III.

Though the book’s origins are unknown, it seems that many of the instructors had copies, or knew of it, and it has been an aid to refresh the minds of the instructors, and to help them remember any possibly forgotten dance steps. This book was not used in class as a reference, nor was it kept in the school building, making it seem almost as obsolete as its identity. The teachings of the instructors come easily from memory and muscle memory alone.
Mestiza, joya castiza,
emblem of Yucatán,
when your smile appears
under the San Juan arch.

~Ermilo “Chispas” Padrón

71 Torres, La Bomba Yucateca, 26.
The Escuela Municipal de Folclore Regional is set in the outskirts of the north-east side of the historical center of the city. Connected to the rest of the block, the building seems to be one whole, cut into separate units, though all having different decorations, windows, and edging. Walking into the building from the street, there are two enormous old, wooden, and mangled doors. The one on the right is the only one that is ever open. There is a waiting room, large enough to contain perhaps forty inexpensive plastic lawn chairs. All the way to the back of this area, the Maypoles adorned with flowers and colorful ribbons, baskets of flowers, and other larger items are stored.
Past the six or so chairs on the right, there are four steps going up to the classrooms, restrooms, and office.
The main area of the building, up the steps, is the larger “room” on the left: an open area with six pillars and a tiled dance floor. To the right, there is a classroom with chairs, another very small dancing room. Immediately in front of the stairs is the secretarial office and within that is the office for the director of the municipal school, Evelín Arzápalo Caballero. Another smaller classroom lies between the restroom and the secretarial office. This classroom is closed off with three sets (one going to the restroom area) of wooden doors, similar to folding closet doors.

The ceiling of the entire building is extremely high and old. A portion fell out while I was taping a rehearsal, and landed near to where I was standing. There is water damage to the building, from old age and hurricane wear and tear. Every echo, musical note, and musical step is heard; the rooms are so alive, they might begin to dance the jarana themselves!

Pictures of the Ballet Folklórico are framed on the walls of the open classroom. Students place their backpacks and belongings (shoes, coats, bottles, beverage trays, and boxes) along the wall. There are also about twenty-four lockers in the restroom and sink area. The sink sits on the outside for all to use. This also makes it easy for the students to fill the beer bottles and glasses with water for practice.

The Yucatán is quite proud of its cultural traditions, and this is evident within this small building. Evelín Arzápalo Caballero, the director of the municipal school, bragged that Yucatán is the only state within the country that houses a cultural education institution; she asserts that Mexico City doesn’t even have one!\(^2\)

This year, the municipal school has approximately 2,000 students, and is offering classes twice a week to students from preschool ages to geriatrics. There are thirteen

\(^2\) Evelín Arzápalo Caballero, in discussion with the author, 8 March 2007.
instructors who volunteer their time, though receive a modest stipend from the Ayuntamiento.

Teaching certificates or degrees in folkloric dance education are not offered anywhere in the state for these teachers. Most began dancing when they were younger and continued into adulthood, performing in the Ballet Folklórico. Each instructor has his or her own method of teaching the dance steps, though it is clear that all instructors prefer to break the steps down, part by part, allowing much time for repetition and memorization. The students dance in a circle, often with the instructor dancing in the center. This helps the students learn how to dance the steps, view how the other students are dancing, and observe minute details while circling the instructor.

![Figure 17: Students Rehearsing in a Circular Pattern](image)

During my time there, classes usually began fifteen minutes late and continued fifteen minutes later into the next class period. Students entered the school chatting with friends, laughing, and practicing dance steps. Many came over to their instructor, eager for a hug and kiss on the cheek to greet them hello. Tight bonds and relationships
between students, teachers, and staff are developed through this school, no matter what neighborhood the students come from.

![Figure 18: Socialization](image)

The dance steps were learned using recordings of *jarana* orchestras. Surprisingly, the orchestra that performs with the Ballet Folklórico was not one of those. Many musical numbers were the ones heard every Monday night at the *vaquería*, though there were many other unfamiliar dances being played and studied at the school. As the evening turned into night, the classrooms grew hotter and hotter. The smell of sweat was stagnant in the air. The instructors tended to allow more water breaks and rest periods towards the end of the night, so the students wouldn’t get overheated. This also allowed a little time for more socialization.

Satellite schools of the arts (offering courses in the ancient language, Mayan, as well as cooking, music, dance, crafts, etc.) are set up in the outer neighborhoods of Mérida, those too far for the student to travel to the center of the city. The space and
financing, including the secretary, security guard, and custodian, are supplied through the government.

There are three levels of classes in the municipal school. For these levels, each woman is asked to purchase dance shoes in addition to a *huipile*, a traditional embroidered dress, to wear during class. Men are asked to purchase their own dance sandals. The *huipiles* are found in many locations around the city and within the neighborhoods. The shoes, on the other hand, are only located within the main city market. Betty’s Zapatería is the recommended *jarana* shoe shop by the school, though other booths within the market offer shoes. Shoe prices begin around 100 Pesos. Basic *huipile* tops also cost about 100 Pesos, if they are machine made.

The school proves to be an center location of education, knowledge, pride, and culture. Many students told me that they danced because they liked it and that it was fun. Teachers seem to maintain the same attitude as the students. María Concepción Echeverría believes that in addition to keeping their own traditions strong within the region, the school, music, and dance are essential elements to share with the cultures and peoples of other countries.\footnote{Maria Concepción Echeverría, in discussion with the author, 7 March 2007.}

Guadalupe Parra describes the music and traditions as rich and extensive. She is one of the instructors who is proud to say that they can distribute color and richness to the Yucatán. She says that Yucatecans are a very happy, calm people, and that many other areas of Mexico do not have the folklore or the dynamics of the Yucatecan people. For that, she believes, Yucatecans are grateful.\footnote{Guadalupe Parra, in discussion with the author, 8 March 2007.}
Renan Andres Chan Flores explains that there are only three levels, or years, of the school. The traditional dances are divided into the three years, based on level of difficulty. The students are split into level and relative age group. Sadly, he adds, many students are unable to complete the three-year complete course. As students get older, their priorities tend to change. Many have to leave due to school or other work commitments. What keeps the students involved as long as possible is the enjoyment that dancing the *jarana* brings them. Renan believes that the students desire to preserve the traditions of their pueblos and peoples.

The school has many opportunities to perform for the community. Many students and faculty members choose to attend the city’s festivals and participate in them. In February, the “Noche Regional” occurs, creating yet another opportunity to perform regional dances during the evening. The students, of course, dress in traditional clothing and enjoy themselves.\(^{75}\)

**Evelín Arzápalo Caballero\(^{76}\)**

Evelín Arzápalo Caballero is the director of the municipal school as well as the Ballet Folklórico Infantil, the teenage performing ensemble of the Ayuntamiento. She has been working with the municipal school and the Ayuntamiento ensembles for twenty years. Evelín is also one of the few people to have a degree in the fine arts. She studied dance, painting, theater, and music at the university level. I had the opportunity to speak with her on two occasions, where she shared extensive information regarding the municipal school as well as the Ballets Folklóricos de Mérida.

\(^{75}\) Renan Andres Chan Flores, in discussion with the author, 12 March 2007.

\(^{76}\) Evelín Arzápalo Caballero, in discussion with the author, 7 and 8 March 2007.
The municipal school is thirty years old, founded in 1977, and dedicates itself to teaching the regional folklore of the Yucatán Peninsula. It began very slowly, with a small number of students. Two years later, it was funded through the municipal government. It has been supported ever since. The school has resided in the present building for twelve years. There are approximately 2,200 students this year, divided into twenty classes. It is the only school in the state of Yucatán that is solely dedicated to traditional dances.

Five years into the development of the municipal school, the Ballet Folklórico Titular was created. The Infantil and Juvenil groups quickly followed. The groups were dedicated to performing the traditional dances for various people of importance, such as governors, presidents, and other officials. Their audience base grew to include tourists and natives as well. Most of the students of the Ballets began by taking classes from the municipal school.

The school is helpful to Mérida in many ways. It teaches the people about their musical history and culture, assists tourism by teaching many of the students who enter the Ballet Folklórico the steps, and maintains an open door policy for visitors interested in visiting the school, taking classes, or learning to dance the jarana.

Today, the municipal school employs thirteen teachers. Eight of the thirteen are in breakout schools throughout the perifiricos (neighborhoods). Five regularly teach at the municipal school. These other schools tend to be placed in far away neighborhoods, where the people would be unable to travel into the center of the city to attend classes.

Neither Mexico nor the Yucatán offer licensure in folklore dance education. Teachers only need to have a sufficient background to teach the other students. Some of
the teachers, according to Evelín, have a basic secondary education, while others have had college courses or have completed a degree in other subjects. Some of the other teachers have a career that they balance with teaching their classes.

Learning the Dance

The jarana is a genre of dances that derive from a mixture of pre-Columbian indigenous Maya and Spanish dances. The style is also divided into two distinct parts (rondo form), juxtaposing the movements and the music with the change. The school’s program begins with the easiest jarana dances, because other jaranas require an abundant amount of coordination to learn and execute properly. First year students, old or young, begin with 3/4 and 6/8 dances. Second year students begin adding in the dances that include the botella (beer bottle) and the charola (drink tray with a beer bottle and four glasses). Though they have become very popular, these dances are not traditional dances of the vaquería. They are known as suerte (luck) dances, showing off the talents of the dancer. Dancers learn the basic steps and work up to the full choreography. Third-year students continue adding to their learned repertoire.

Instructors teach students the dance steps within one week of classes. The first day, they are taught the paso (step) which is repeated over and over again, committing it to memory. In each class that follows, the students begin to learn different combinations of the paso, until they learn the whole work and its choreography.

Professor María teaches the dance steps to her students using logic. She breaks down the information for them, explaining to her students that most of the steps are mirror images. The left foot completes the pattern and is followed by the right foot. There
are only seven beats to each pattern. The eighth beat is used to “cut” the pattern and bring the feet back to the central position.

Yamile structures her classes to teach the basics first. This includes hand and arm position, foot position, basic direction commands, the basic dance patterns, as well as the basic dance commands. The *jarana*, according to Yamile, only has two real dance steps. The trick of the genre is the combination of the steps with the two time signatures: 3/4 and 6/8. She shared that each dance has its own special significance to the history and culture of the people.

Students want to learn the *jarana* because they see it so much. There are performances incorporating it every night throughout the city. Many families have long histories of taking dance classes and having dancers in the family, and they want their children to continue the tradition. For many, it is also a hobby. Others take classes to learn the steps in order to feel more comfortable participating in festivals, where everybody dances, no matter what level of talent they may have. Classes begin in September and continue until June, when they end with large performances, showing off all the dances students learned to their family and friends.
Figure 19: Students from the Municipal School: Aurora, Mayra, Bella, and Belen

During my time at the school, students were always friendly towards each other, to the instructors, the staff, and to the adults and friends accompanying the students. By my last day, students and teachers began to ask if I would dance in a class. Being an instrumentalist and not a dancer, I immediately said yes, knowing I would be greatly lagging behind the other dancers.

Within seconds of the class beginning, three girls immediately began to help me (see Figure 19). Aurora, Mayra, and Bella were experienced students in the class. They led me through the dance moves and slight changes in formations. They broke down the steps for me, and told me when to turn around, move forwards or backwards, if the dance was in 3/4 or 6/8, and when I needed to change the pattern from the left foot to the right foot. I can only imagine that if I were to have had the opportunity to remain in Mérida longer and take more dances, that these three young ladies would have made me an expert. It was that day when I realized exactly how unique and special this school is.
Everybody is there because they want to be there. The students truly want to learn the dances and experience their culture.
Figure 20: “El Baile de la Charola”

Me gusta tu zapateado
cuando bailas la jarana
y aunque me gusta tu hermana
prefiero ser su cuñado.\textsuperscript{77}

I like your dance steps
when you dance the jarana
and even though I like your sister
I prefer to be your brother-in-law.

\textsuperscript{77} Torres, \textit{La Bomba Yucateca}, 46.
CHAPTER V. THE HELP OF THE AYUNTAMIENTO

Figure 21: The Building of La Secretaría del Desarrollo Cultural

Dirección de Desarrollo Cultural and Deyanira Aguilar Pacheco

On my last full day in Mérida, I went to find the office of the Secretaría de Dessarrollo Cultural (Secretary of Cultural Development). There, I was hoping to finally find the director appointed by the municipal president, who was in charge of running the municipal schools, their breakout locations, the Ballets Folklóricos, and the nightly
artistic performances, as well as the Mérida en domingo (Sunday in Mérida) production. In the beautiful building, not more than two blocks from my hotel, I found many answers. With the help of María Díaz Mena, secretary, and Deyanira Aguilar Pacheco, the Director of the Department of Artistic Formation, I learned more about the Ayuntamiento, municipal government, and what these offer.\textsuperscript{78}

Within the Departamento de Desarrollo Cultural lies the Departamento de Formación Artística del Ayuntamiento (Department of Artistic Formation of the Municipality). Deyanira Aguilar Pacheco runs this department. The Departamento is dedicated to coordinating the activities and relationships of the artistic groups and cultural centers (the schools outside the main city). The groups include the Ballet Folklórico Infantil, Juvenil, Titular, and the Camerata, the chamber ensemble of the Ayuntamiento. The program is run through the municipal government of Yucatán state and remains a separate entity from the state government, which runs another cultural institution (ICY, or the Instituto Cultural de Yucatán, which focuses on Western Art traditions). The Department of Artistic Formation is unique in that it employs workers in the office and other areas that are artists themselves. Deyanira is a dancer and María plays the viola and is a composer.

Cultural centers include the municipal school, the breakout centers, and others that are sponsored through the Ayuntamiento and located in other cities, like Cholul. The municipal school does not charge the students, though some of the breakout locations throughout the city request a modest fee of 100 Pesos a year, to keep their branch programs running efficiently. María says that it is symbolic not to pay too much for the classes. The funds come from tax monies paid by the residents of Mérida.

\textsuperscript{78} Deyanira Aguilar Pacheco and María Díaz Mena, in discussion with the author, 12 March 2007.
The municipal president, Federico Granja Ricalde, is presently in his third year (triено). He is a great patron of the arts and has chosen to spend his time in office supporting the arts. A festival celebrating the arts occurs each year. Through the support of the municipal president, the nightly performances employ twenty to twenty-five people to work the show. These employees are hired through Eventos Tradicionales (Traditional Events), and provide chairs, sound equipment, setup and stage strike support for each performance. Mérida en domingo employs over fifty employees to work behind the scenes, and over eighty artists participate in the Sunday festivities.

Deyanira and María agree that each family in the country of Mexico contains at least one artist. It is their job to create opportunities for each artist. Constant positive response and participation keep the department and classrooms full. Courses offered at the various schools include tap, jazz, Mexican dance, Spanish dance, cooking, guitar, and Mayan, to name a few. The Escuela Municipal de Folclore is considered a special case of the municipal government. It is much older than the other cultural centers in the area and only focuses on one subject, the jarana. Deyanira is proud of the school. The school maintains the longest tradition of schools, and is completely free. The school also has a tradition of maintaining multiple generations of families participating in the classes. The school’s rent and paychecks for the teacher, director, secretary, custodian, and security guard come from the department.

Deyanira also focuses on coordinating cultural centers in various cities or villages in the Yucatán. This program, called “Nuestra Danza en su Comunidad” (“Our Dance in Your Community”), began in 2002 and brings two to three commissaries to a community outside of Mérida to spend five to six months offering folklore dance courses in each
neighborhood. At the end of each community program, a performance is held for the teachers and municipal government officials. The program moves throughout the state and teaches the people the *jarana*. It is a means for the municipal government to reach out further into the state to keep the dance traditions strong.
Figure 22: Dancing with the Tray Becomes More Difficult on a Box

Para bailar la *jarana*
hay que escoger pareja…
que sea bonita y no vieja
y le entre al baile con gana.\(^9\)

In order to dance the *jarana*
one needs to find a partner…
that is pretty and young
and that enters the dance with desire.

\(^9\) Torres, *La Bomba Yucateca*, 84.
CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSIONS:
MUSICKING THE JARANA AND YUCATECAN IDENTITY

Within the past five hundred years of Yucatecan history, identity and ethnicity have caused many problems between social classes. By the twentieth century, political powers began to recognize the need to support ancient, modern, and mixed traditions. The jarana and the vaquería embraced all of these ideals. Through musical means and participation of all, people of Maya, mestizo, and Spanish heritages created a larger identity, Yucatecan.

The jarana is a special genre of music and dance, requiring the assistance of all people present. Musicians are needed (or people to work sound equipment), dancers are essential to dance, and a larger means of uniting is necessary, introducing planners, locations, friends, families, and loved ones. In many cases, an audience is also present. Setup and cleanup crews are available and at the event’s disposal. Taxpayers’ monies are used. Government officials and their employees may work behind the scenes, promoting the performance or culture. In Mérida, tourist stations and magazines describe the event as a “must see” for tourists and travelers. The late hour of the performance requires a meal. Restaurants, cooks, and wait staff are present. Light treats of ice cream, popcorn, and other tasty treats are also available by vendors. A large web of responsible people are all participants in the vaquería. Without the support these parties musicking together, the event would not occur.

The municipal government has worked for thirty years to provide free education in regional dance to any person of any age who desires to learn the dances. Unlike any school I have ever encountered, the students are only asked to purchase their own dance
shoes, and females to purchase a traditional dress (*huipile*) for rehearsals. Students attend classes two times each week from September to June, participating with strangers, friends, people from different neighborhoods or countries, and teachers. If the student shows great talent for the genre, they may be asked to join the Ballet Folklórico de Mérida, sponsored by the Ayuntamiento de Mérida under direction of the municipal government.

From what I observed, the students all love the dance. They love the tradition, the friendship, the extracurricular activity, and the exercise. They participate because they can and they want to. Traditionally, many people think of school as a requirement. The Municipal School of Regional Folklore remains a separate, special entity. Thanks to the combination of the school, the teachers, the students, and the government support, the essence of this school and tradition is almost beyond words.

As a licensed music educator, I felt it was only appropriate for me to spend my fieldwork in a school, observing students and teachers. Cross-cultural education and cross-curricular education is becoming ever so important in this day and age. Understanding how ethnicities of large populations of schools work is essential to being a successful teacher. Considering cultural differences within schools is also necessary.

Somehow, music educators in the United States are missing the support of the government and community. Recognizing the importance of bonding activities, musicking, experiencing music and dance, and relating it to one’s own history and culture are priceless in one’s education. I would bet that few American band students know the significance of a military band, or why bands were developed, let alone recognize key works of the repertoire.
Through communication and support of the students, teachers, directors, and municipal government, the Municipal School of Regional Folklore in Mérida is exemplary. Through sharing my interviews, histories, and activities of my fieldwork, I hope to instill a deep desire in future students and readers to learn more about a genre of music and dance that has been largely ignored throughout the history of ethnomusicology.

Future Research

While I am proud of what I was able to accomplish and learn in the nine days of my stay in Mérida for my thesis research, I understand the shortcomings of my Master’s magnum opus. As mentioned in the preface, I had very little time to get to know the parents and students, children and adults, who participate in the dance program (the arrival and politics of President Bush further hindered my relationships). More time with the instructors would have opened deeper doors of understanding of the historical and cultural aspirations for the genre. Further meanings and values of each song and dance may then have been shared with me. Linking the school and the Ballets Folkóricos de Mérida together with cultural tourism and government support would have made a stronger, if not more interesting, study.

Future research regarding the jarana of the Yucatán should be focused on broadening the scope and range of the regional dance. Interviews and performance footage have shown similar dance styles and music around the peninsula. A history of the jarana orchestra would be a wonderful addition to the research survey of Mérida. The
group of men who make up the orchestra are a wonderful asset to the city, as well as one of the main sources of musical ambiance throughout the weekdays and nights.

A detailed history of the Ballets Folklóricos Juvenil, Infantil, and Titular would be beneficial in learning the importance of each ensemble. Their development occurred separately, so information on their past directors, tours, influences, and dynamics would clarify their contributions to Yucatecan culture. The relationship to the Ballets Folklóricos and cultural tourism have been hinted at in this thesis, though this requires further expansion and study.

Within the Ayuntamiento, explanations of its outreach programs in the smaller neighborhoods would better reveal the importance of the municipal school. The short-term outreach programs to other cities in the Yucatán would make a fascinating and rewarding case-by-case study. In addition, learning the meaning, significance, and histories of each song and dance in the various schools would be a wonderful addition to the jarana literature.
Cuando toquen “El torito”
vene conmigo a bailar
Y así podrás terminar
En el suelo acostadito.  

When they play “The Little Bull”
come with me to dance
and you will be able to finish
lying dazed on the ground.

---

80 Torres, _La Bomba Yucateca_, 95.
APPENDIX I. PRE-COLUMBIAN INSTRUMENTS

O’Brien-Roth asserts that “music and musical instruments played an essential role in communicating between people and spirits and were important in rituals and rites of passage.” Politics, war, festivals, rituals, sacred holidays, and pleasure for the gods were other important reasons to perform the music. Instruments were made from clay, wood, bone, membranes, and any other material found throughout the lands.

Surviving evidence of aerophones indicates that the Mayas played on flutes. Double-tube, triple-tube, and quadruple-tube flutes show that there was a potential for Maya polyphony. Trumpets, ocarinas, and conch shells provided a variety of timbres. Idiophones included rattles, shells or seeds strung together and attached to clothing or performed while being held, as well as bone and wood rasps.

The most important instruments were the membranophones. The tun or tunkūl was a hollowed-out log with a split tongue that produced various tones. Associated with the rain god, Yun Chaac, this instrument is still performed today. Another membranophone of continuing use was the single-headed drum, the zacatán. Chordophones have not been uncovered in ruin sites, nor has historical documentation discussed the usage of chordophones in pre-Columbian Maya communities.

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The Yucatán retains two pre-Columbian dances. The first, the ribbon dance, is described by O’Brien-Rothe:

The Yucatec Maya’s most widely known ancient costumed dance is the ribbon dance (*xtoles*). It was formerly done in public during carnival in Mérida, Mexico. Following pre-Columbian lowland iconographic depictions, fourteen male dancers (seven dressed as women and seven as men) carried spiked vessel calabash rattles, which sounded with metal pellet bells sewn to their clothing. The accompaniment was provided by two musicians each playing an end-blown duct flute (*pito*, a long tine tube, pierced with holes for fingering) and a single-headed tin drum, played with the hands. The *xtoles* song was sung in Maya(n) during the dance. For public festivities a band played before and after the dancing, going from house to house.82

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82 Ibid., 656.
The second surviving dance is a fertility dance, called the pig’s head (*cabeza del cochino*) or dance of the head (*okot pol*), in which a pig is slaughtered and the skin is shared throughout the village. Songs on agrarian themes are performed during a procession of the pig’s head.\(^\text{83}\)

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\(^{83}\) Ibid., 656-7
APPENDIX II. THE BOOTLEGGED SOURCE

This appendix begins the translation of the bootlegged copies of the mystery text, given to me by the professor, María Concepción Echeverría. The author, title, and publication date are unknown. I have copied the text from the photocopies verbatim and have supplied a rough translation of the information.

The Vaquerías of the Yucatán Peninsula

Yucatán

Las Vaquerías en la Península de Yucatán

The Vaquerías of the Yucatán Peninsula

La vaquería nació en las haciendas. Después de la marca del ganado, las mujeres “vaqueras” atendían solícitamente a los invitados y a sus esposas y como final de fiesta danzaban viejos sones mayas influídos por la música española o viceversa.

The vaquería was born in the haciendas. After the marking (branding) of the livestock, the “cowgirls” looked solely after the guests and their wives and after the end of the party they danced old Maya sones that were influenced by Spanish music or vice versa (the Spanish music was influenced by the Maya sones).
Las vaquerías se celebran anualmente en honor al patrón o patrona de la hacienda o pueblo, fiesta que tardaba tres días y cuatro noches. El día anunciado, llega la Orquesta Jaranera integrada por diez o doce músicos, que al entrar a la finca anunciaba su presencia tocando una alegre jarana para inquietar a los habitantes en tanto los “voladores” invadían el espacio.

The vaquerías anually celebrate the honor of the patron or patroness of the hacienda or village, a party which lasts three days and four nights. The day announced (the first day), the jarana orchestra is composed of ten or twelve musicians, which enters the estate playing a festive jarana in order to trouble all of the “flying villagers” [possibly spirits] that are invading the space.

La fiesta comienza en la casa del organizador principal que por rara coincidencia, recibe el nombre de “DIPUTADO”. De casa del organizador, los danzantes acompañados de la Orquesta Jaranera, se dirigen al cabo de la población en busca del palo de cebo, palma de cocotero o de guano, que llevarán danzando al ritmo de La Angaripola y que sembrarán en el centro del improvisado coso, donde habrán de efectuarse las dilatadas “Corridas de toros” (fiesta brava pueblerina con características peculiares).

The festivities began in the house of the principle organizer that on rare occasion, receives the title of “deputy.” In the house of the organizer, the dancers accompany the jarana orchestra, after directing the people to search for the feed pail, coconut palm (or
other fruit), that are raised dancing to the rhythm of “La Angaripola,” which sow the center where they will carry out the prolongations “Corridas de toros” (which is a brave village festival with peculiar characteristics).

Después de plantar el árbol, los bailadores interpretarán “La danza de las Cintas” en torno al palo y de ahí continuar bailando hasta el lugar donde habrá de efectuarse la Vaquería.

After planting the tree, the dancers perform “The Dance of the Ribbons” and turn the pole and continue dancing until they will carry out the vaquería.

La Vaquería en los pueblos y villas de Yucatán, se efectúan en los corredores del Palacio Municipal, y en las haciendas y rancherías, debajo de enramadas tejidas con palma de coco, o simplemente en alguna explanada de forma cuadrangular, alrededor de la cual se alinean dos o tres filas de sillas de tijera, en donde tomarán lugar exclusivamente las bailadoras y sus acompañantes, los hombres no ocuparán jamás esos asientos.

The vaquería in the villages and small towns of the Yucatán carry out the operations of the municipal palace, and in the haciendas and ranches, under the weaves of the coconut leaves, or simply in a quadrangle form, around an area where they align two or three rows of chairs, where the dancers will exclusively perform. The men will not occupy those chairs.
En un extremo del cuadrángulo se ubica la "Charanga Jaranera", que ameniza
ñlas vaquerías, acompaña las procesiones y anima con su presencia las corridas de
toros. Esta se integra por: dos trompetas, dos clarinetes, dos trombones, un balo, un
saxofón tenor, un huiro o rascador y dos timbales.

In the extreme case that a quadrangle is situated in “Charanga Jaranera,”
vaquerías are threatened, the processions accompany and animate the presence of the
running of the bulls. This is composed of: two trumpets, two clarinets, two trombones, a
balo, a tenor saxophone, a guiro or scraper and two drums.

La Jaran

Es el baile típico de la península de Yucatán, existen dos formas métricas de este
baile; la jarana 3 x 4 es valseada y tiene el aire de la jota aragonesa de la que deriva.
Inicialmente esta jarana era exclusivamente para ser bailada; posteriormente es le han
agregado textos rimados, ya sea adaptándolos a una música preexistente o bien,
poniéndole música a diversos versos festivales.

This typical dance of the Yucatán peninsula has two metric forms: the jarana in
3/4 (which is similar to a waltz) is similar to the Aragonese dance from which it derives.
Initially, this jarana was exclusively danced; later, rhymed texts were added, already
adopting preexisting music and incorporating it into other festival music.
La jarana 6 x 8, zapateada, nieta de los bailes andaluces e hija de los sones mestizos, es de movimiento vivo marcado a dos tiempos, cuyo acento rítmico cae en el segundo tercio del tiempo ligero de compás.

The jarana 6/8, tapped with the feet, is the granddaughter of the Andalusian dances and is the daughter of the mestizo sones. It is a brilliantly marked movement with two tempos, in which accented rhythms fall on the second part of the beat.

La jarana es un baile de pareja que consiste en un zapateado sin pasos fijos ni diferenciación entre el hombre y la mujer. Predomina en el baile de la jarana el hieratismo de las danzas aborígenes que influye en la verticalidad de las posturas de sus intérpretes, que en las partes valseadas realizan giros, mientras levantan los brazos en ángulo recto al estilo de los bailadores de la jota y efectúan tranquilos con los dedos, simulando las castañuelas españolas.

The jarana is a paired dance that consists of fixed danced steps, similar for both women and men. It predominates the dance of the jarana in the aboriginal dances that influenced the verticality of the postures of the dancers, which was part of waltz turns, while raising the arms in an erect angle is the style of the dancers of the jota and is carried out through the fingers, simulating Spanish castanets.

Ha recibido influencia española, cubana y colombiana, para su conocimiento podemos agruparla en dos ramas: la romántica y la festiva. La música romántica ha sido
compuesta para ser cantada en las serenatas, el yucateco no le canta no le canta a sus cuidades o a sus ruinas, exclusivamente a la mujer. La música festiva ha sido compuesta para ser bailada durante las vaquerías principalmente y también en los carnavales pueblerinos.

It [the jarana] has received Spanish influence, Cuban and Colombian. With this knowledge, we have grouped [it] in two branches: the romantic and the festive. The romantic music has been composed for singing the serenades. The Yucatecan does not sing to the cities or to their ruins; it is exclusively for the woman. The festival music is composed for the dance during the principal vaquerías and for the pueblo carnivals.

Los principales ritmos bailables del Mayab son los siguientes: jaranas, fandangos y sones de jaleo; jarabillos, danzas y guarachas.

The principal rhythms of the Mayab dances are the following: jaranas, fandangos and uproar [lively or comical] sones; jarabillos, dances and guarachas.

Las jaranas derivan de la jota española; los fandangos y sones de jaleo, de los saraos hispanos; los jarabillos tienen hondas raíces mayas; las danzas son autóctonas unas y otras de origen extranjero; las guarachas son originarias de Cuba.

The jaranas are derived from the Spanish jota; the fandangos and sones de jaleo, are from the Saraos (Hispanics); the jarabillos are from the Maya race; the dances are
indigenous (one and others) to foreign influences; the guarachas are originally from Cuba.

Ya hemos hablado anteriormente de las jaranas y los sones de jaleo, ahora nos referiremos concretamente a algunos bailes:

We have already talked about the jaranas and the sones de jaleo, now we will refer to specific dances:

LA ANGARIPOLA. Pasacalle a ritmo de 6 x 8 que se danza desde la casa del Diputado u organizador de las festividades, hasta el lugar donde se efectuará la Vaquería.

“La Angaripola” is a pascalle in 6/8 that is danced in the house of the “deputy” or organizer of the festival, until the location [they arrive at] that the vaquería will take place.

AIRES YUCATECOS. Es la jarana a ritmo de 3 x 4 con la cuál da inicio oficialmente la Vaquería.

“Yucatecan Aires” is a jarana in 3/4 which officially begins the vaquería.

DANZA DE LA CABEZA DE COCHINO. Se baila al ritmo de una tonada muy peculiar, lenta y acompasada. En una pequeña mesa se coloca la cabeza del cerdo cocida bajo
tierra. Va adornada con flores y penden de ella listones de colores tomados por cada uno de las danzantes llamadas madrinas. Esta danza se efectúa a las doce del día; sale de la casa del organizador de las fiestas y se va danzando por las calles hasta llegar a la casa del que será el próximo organizador del año venidero, quien la recibe y danza con ella.

“Dance of the Pig’s Head” is a dance with a peculiar rhythm, slow and rhythmic. A small table rests the head of a pig that has been cooked in the ground. It is adorned with flowers and colored ribbons, one for each of the dancers called grandmothers. This dance occurs at noon; leaving the house of the organizer of the festival, they dance throughout the streets until they reach the house of the next organizer of the coming year, who receives them and dances with the “grandmothers.”

EL DEGOLLETE. Durante la guerra de castas este fandango indiano fue tomado como “himno de batalla”. Consiste de tres pequeños 6 x 8 identificables con el despante criollo, con el romanticismo mestizo y la protesta indígena. El pueblo lo danzaba en forma burlesca, satirizando las actitudes sociales de sus opresores.

“The Degollete” is a native fandango from the caste wars which became a “battle hymn.” It consists of three small 6/8 sections identifiable with the rude criollo, the romantic mestizo, and the protesting native. The village dances it in a burlesque style, satirizing the social attitudes of their oppressors.
EL TUNKULUCHU-HU. Tunkuluchu significa en maya búhu, y Hu es la expresión de su ulular. Este baile representa el apareamiento de los búhus; consta de dos pasajes musicales, en el primero se hace alusión a la unión de los picos juntando levemente las narices, y en la segunda se imita el vuelo nupcial del ave, mientras se grita: ju, ju, ju.

“The Tunkuluchu-Hu” signifies the búhu [bird] Maya, and ‘hu’ is a howl. This dance represents the mating of the búhus; it consists of two musical passages. In the first it makes the allusion to the union of the two beaks united slightly at the nostrils, and the second imitates the nuptial flight of the bird, while it howls: ju, ju, ju [who, who, who].

LA DANZA DE LAS CINTAS. El origen de esta danza se remonta a la región de Baviera, En el siglo XIV; de ahí pasa a los Países Bajos e Inglaterra y llega a España probablemente durante el reinado de Carlos V. Después de la Conquista llega a Yucatán; de un mástil central adornado con flores de vivos colores y de gran tamaño, penden listones multicolores, mismos que son asidos por los danzantes con los cuáles efectúan diversos tejidos durante la ejecución de la danza.

“The Dance of the Ribbons” is from the remote region of Bavaria, from the sixteenth century; from here it was passed to the lowlands and England, and arrived in Spain most likely during the reign of Charles V. After the Conquest it came to the Yucatán, a central mast was adorned with colorful flowers on the top, with multicolored ribbons, grasped by the dancers, which weave different patterns during the dance.

84 Many questions have arisen concerning the origin of the Maypole dance, or the ribbon dance. Regions throughout the world claim it is native to their region.
LAS MUJERES QUE SE PINTAN. El temperamento jacarandoso del yucateco encontró en la guaracha cubana su medio de expresión más adecuado, e inyectó nuevos ánimos a los carnavales que se realizan en el Estado. En 1872 aparece la primera comparsa y las letras de esta son generalmente satíricas.

“The Ladies that Paint Themselves” is a temperament Yucatecan dance, which was encountered in the Cuban “guaracha” in the middle of an expression, and injected new animations at the carnivals that occurred in the state. In 1872, it first appeared in writing, and is satirically described.

EL TORITO. Son de jaleo que se utiliza como fin de las vaquerías, llenos de colorido que representan el enfrentamiento del novillero (el hombre) con el toro (la mujer). El hombre toma como capote su paliacate en el momento que suena la fanfarria y conservando el ritmo de su zapateado, embiste con gracia y elegancia tratando de derribar a su contrincante, ya sea con un golpe de hombro o de cadera o una zancadilla. Después del son de jaleo se tocarán las “Dianas” que significa que la fiesta ha terminado.

“The Little Bull” is an uproar son that occurs at the end of the vaquerías, filled with color that represents the encounter of the bullfighter (the man) and the bull (the woman). The man takes the cloak (his scarf) when the fanfare begins and moves it to the rhythm of the footwork, attacking with grace and elegance, trying to knock down its opponent, which is
seen as a hit (smack) to the man, or hip (butting) or a trip. After the *jaleo son*, the “Diana” touch signifies the end of the dance.

**Origin of Yucatecan Dance**

*Yucatán, riquísimo en coreografía prehispanica, tenía forzosamente que conservar, en el pueblo mestizo, la tradición de sus ancestros indígenas en parte modificada por la tradición española.*

The Yucatán is filled with pre-Hispanic choreography, which has been strongly preserved, in the *mestizo* villages. The tradition of the indigenous ancestors is partly modified by the Spanish tradition.

*Las danzas populares yucatecas tienen obligado teatro en las verbenas peninsulares que se designan con el nombre regional de “vaquerías” las cuales tuvieron su origen en las haciendas o rancherias, cuando los patrones o hacendados mandaban marcar las reses y posteriormente reunían a toda la gente del lugar para organizar una comilona (fiesta) donde pudieran bailar y divertirse.*

The popular Yucatecan dances occur outside in open-air areas in the peninsula which is called a *vaquería*, which come from the hacienda or ranch traditions, where the patrons or hacienda landowner mandates a branding of the livestock and brings the people together to organize a festival where they can dance and enjoy themselves.
Llámenle “vaquería” por la indumentaria de los bailadores (que portaban sombreros iguales a los que usaban los vaqueros, motivo por el cual, las bailadoras eran llamadas “vaqueras”) estas fiestas tardaban 3 días y 4 noches o toda la semana, según la situación económica de los interesados.

It is called the “vaquería” because of the dancers (who carry hats similar to those worn by cowboys, which is the reason why the female dancers are called “vaqueras”) and the festivities continue for three days and four nights or an entire week, according to the economic situation of those interested.

La fiesta la amenizaba una charanga en la cual sobresalía un instrumento llamado “jarana” (instrumento de la misma forma de la guitarra, pero de menor tamaño) que es el que marcaba notablemente el ritmo del baile.

The festival brightened the charanga by which an instrument called the “jarana” (an instrument similar to the guitar, though smaller in size) is the notable marker of the rhythm of the dance.

Esta fue la razón por la cual la gente optó por llamarle “jarana”.

This is the reason that the people opted to call it the “jarana.”
La conjunción de sonecitos mayas y los sones españols determinaron el nacimiento del baile popular: yucateco.

The mixing of the small Maya sones and the Spanish sones created the birth of the popular dance: Yucatecan.

La jarana tiene 2 ritmos: el 3 x 4 ó 3/4 y el 8 x 8 ó 6/8 de compás.

The jarana has two rhythms: in 3/4 or 6/8 time.

El ritmo de 3 x 4 proviene de la jota aragoneza y es un ritmo lento, valsado.

The meter in 3/4 derives from the Aragonese jota, has a slow tempo, and is waltz-like.

El ritmo de 6 x 8 proviene de la jota andaluza y es un ritmo rápido, zapateado.

The meter in 6/8 derives from the Andalusian jota and has a fast, toe-tapping tempo.

Durante la vaquería, la coreografía de la jarana es libre, es decir, no existen pasos fijos entre el hombre y la mujer ya que cada uno puede realizar sus propias creaciones.
During the *vaquería*, the choreography of the *jarana* is free, that is to say, there are no fixed steps differentiating the male and female, and no one can determine its exact creations.

*Actualmente las vaquerías se realizan en los corredores del palacio municipal, con motivo de la festividad religiosa del santo patrono del lugar y comienza a partir de las 21:00 horas en el cual se ejecuta el baile regional más importante: “la jarana yucateca”.*

Actually, the *vaquerías* occur in the corridor of the municipal palace, on the occasion of a religious festival of the patron saint of the location, and begins at 9:00 p.m., where they execute the most important regional dance: “the Yucatecan *jarana.*”
APPENDIX III. THE STEPS

This is the second part of the bootlegged information given to me by the professor María Concepción Echeverría. I chose not to translate the information, due to the missing *pasos*, making it difficult (impossible) for the reader to comprehend the step-by-step dance steps. It appears that *paso* one is missing, making the sequence that follows difficult to understand, as it is built off the directions of the first set of directions. Though still in Spanish, it would be beneficial for a reader versed in some of the *pasos* to have the opportunity to learn other dance steps.
### The Steps

#### Los Pasos

**Paso No. 3-2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tiempos</th>
<th>Secuencias</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1-4) – Los primeros cuatro tiempos son iguales al paso número uno. (Es el tercer paso base de primer grado).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Se da media vuelta a la derecha asentando el pie derecho doble y el izquierdo sirve de apoyo para girar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Se complete la vuelta asentando el pie izquierdo doble y el derecho sirve de apoyo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Se asienta punta y planta del pie derecho en el lugar inicial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Remate (izquierdo – derecho).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nota:** se realiza la misma secuencia comenzando con pie contrario (doble)
Paso No. 4

Tiempos       Secuencias
1             Se asienta la planta del pie izquierdo en el lugar inicial.
2             Se levanta brevemente el pie derecho, se baja y se asienta el pie – izquierdo en el lugar.
3             Se levanta nuevamente el pie derecho, se baja y se asienta el pie – izquierdo en el lugar.
4             Se repite lo anterior.
5             Se asienta punta y planta del pie derecho en el lugar inicial.
7             Se lleva el pie derecho delante del izquierdo (cruzado) asentando – punta y planta.
7             Se regresa el pie derecho al lugar inicial asentando punta y planta.
8             Remate (izquierdo – derecho).

Nota: se realiza la misma secuencia comenzando con pie contrario (doble).
Paso No. 7

**Tiempos.**

1. Se asienta pie izquierdo (retrocediendo un poco del lugar inicial).
2. Se lleva el pie derecho en diagonal (hacia adentro), se regresa al lugar seguido del pie izquierdo.
3. Se asienta pie derecho doble (retrocediendo del lugar inicial).
4. Se lleva el pie izquierdo en diagonal (hacia adentro), se regresa al lugar inicial seguido del pie derecho.
5. Se asienta el pie izquierdo doble en el lugar inicial.
6. Se asienta el pie derecho doble en el lugar inicial.
7. Se lleva el pie izquierdo hacia adelante y el pie derecho se asienta en el lugar.
8. Se regresa el pie izquierdo al lugar para marcar el remate.

**Nota:** se realiza la misma secuencia comenzando con pie contrario (doble).
Paso No. 8

**Tiempos.**

**Secuencias.**

1. Se asienta el pie izquierdo en el lugar inicial.

2. Se lleva el pie derecho hacia arriba, baja y se asienta el pie izquierdo en el lugar inicial.

3. Se realiza un cambio (se pasa el pie derecho atrás y el izquierdo – adelante).

4. Se lleva el pie izquierdo hacia arriba, se baja y se asienta el pie derecho en el lugar inicial.

5. Se realiza otro cambio (se pasa el pie izquierdo atrás y el derecho adelante).

6. Se asienta punta y planta del pie derecho.

7. Se asienta punta y planta del pie izquierdo.

8. Remate (derecho-izquierdo).

Nota: se realiza la misma secuencia comenzando con pie contrario (doble)
Paso No. 9

Tiempos.  Secuencias.

1  Se asienta pie izquierdo en el lugar inicial.

2  Se asienta punta y planta de pie derecho en el lugar inicial.

3  Se asienta punta y planta de pie derecho delante del pie izquierdo — (cruzado).

4  Se regresa el pie derecho al lugar asentando punta y planta.

5  Se asienta punta y planta de pie izquierdo en el lugar inicial.

6  Se asienta punta y planta de pie izquierdo adelante del pie derecho (cruzado).

7  Se regresa el pie izquierdo al lugar inicial asentando punta y planta.

8  Remate (derecho-izquierdo).

Nota: se realiza la misma secuencia comenzando con pie contrario (doble)
Paso No. 10

Tiempos.          Secuencias.

1  Se asinta pie izquierdo en el lugar inicial.

2  Se lleva el pie derecho hacia atrás asentando punta y planta.

3  Se lleva el pie izquierdo hacia atrás asentando punta y planta.

4  Se realiza un cepilleo con pie derecho (cruzando el pie izquierdo).

5  Se regresa el pie derecho al lugar inicial asentando planta doble.

6  Se realiza cepilleo, ahora con pie izquierdo (cruzando el pie derecho).

7  Se regresa el pie izquierdo al lugar inicial asentando planta doble.

8  Remate. (derecho-izquierdo)

Nota: se realiza la misma secuencia comenzando con pie contrario (doble)
María Concepción Echeverría

María loves to dance. She learned the *jarana* from her mother, who had the grace and facility of the genre. For thirty-three years, she has been dancing her passion. She believes it is in her blood. Her grandparents were dancers, her grandfather from Spain, her grandmother from Cuba. She says she has the mixture of the music, the rhythm, and the culture within her. She performed with the Ballet Folklórico until she was eighteen years old.

María teaches and dances because it never leaves her. She teaches for the love of it and not for making a career out of it. When she was pregnant with her daughter, she danced until her seventh month, returning three months after giving birth. Her baby was quite happy when she danced, making it an easy pregnancy. Even when she is at home, she finds her feet moving; the rhythm is constantly within her.

The school, music, and dance are essential elements to share with the cultures of other countries and their people, as well as keeping their own traditions strong within their region. To teach her students, she teaches the steps slowly. She also breaks down the information for them, explaining to her students that the most of the steps are mirror images. The left foot completes the pattern and is followed by the right foot. There are only seven beats to each pattern. The eighth beat is used to “cut” the pattern and bring the feet back to the central position.

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85 María Concepción Echeverría, in discussion with the author, 7 March 2007.
Renan Andres Chan Flores\textsuperscript{86}

In 1981, Renan began taking classes and learning how to dance the \textit{jarana}. He immediately became involved with the Ballets Folklóricos and the municipal school and has yet to retire his dancing shoes. He spent many years directing the Ballets and has been able to maintain strong bonds and relationships with many of the Ballet members, directors, and families, as well as with the students at the municipal school. Twenty-two years into his teaching career, he continues his strong belief of maintaining the historic traditions of the \textit{vaquería} and the \textit{jarana}. It is one of his jobs to conserve these traditions.

Sadly, he states, many students are unable to complete the three-year complete course. As students get older, their priorities are required to change. Many have to leave due to school or work priorities. What keeps the students involved as long as possible is the enjoyment that dancing the \textit{jarana} brings them. Renan believes that the students desire to preserve the traditions of their pueblos and races.

The dance steps, according to Renan, speak the history of the festivals and the dances. The majority of the people do not know the entire sequence of steps. Depending on the region and the people, the dances may slightly differ from city to city.

The school has many opportunities to perform for the community. Many choose to attend the city’s festivals and participate in them. In February, the “Noche Regional” occurs, creating yet another ample opportunity to perform regional dances during the evening. The students, of course, dress in traditional clothing, and enjoy themselves.

Renan has loved his experiences and years of teaching. He has strong bonds with the students and is always pleased to find opportunities to share the \textit{jarana} to as many people from as many places possible.

\textsuperscript{86} Renan Andres Chan Flores, in discussion with the author, 12 March 2007.
Yamile Ivette Miranda Montañez

Yamile has been studying the *jarana* for thirty years. She has been teaching classes at the municipal school since 1997. Today, she teaches four classes of first, second, and third year adults. In the past, she has had experience directing and participating in the Ballet Folklórico Infantil and Juveníl. When she participated in the Ayuntamiento groups, she traveled to Europe to promote Yucatecan culture. When her students have a higher aptitude and ability with the dances, they are often invited to become part of the Ballet Folklórico.

Guadalupe Parra

Guadalupe Parra learned to dance as a small child and continued her studies until adulthood. She performed with the Ballet Folklórico when she was younger, traveling to Europe and the United States with the ensemble. She also directed one of the ensembles in 1979. Though she does not regularly dance today, she still loves the culture and tradition. The dances and music are the most rewarding to her. Today, she teaches four classes at the municipal school. There are thirty-two students in each class and are all older students who want to learn the dances. She states that it takes three years to learn the dances.

Guadalupe believes that it is most important to keep the culture of the dance alive. The *jarana* is the most representative thing Yucatecans have. Thankfully, the school is dedicated to keeping the tradition alive for the Spaniards, *mestizos*, and Mayas of the

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87 Yamile Ivette Miranda Montañez, in discussion with the author, 9 March 2007.
88 Guadalupe Parra, in discussion with the author, 8 March 2007.
Yucatán. She says, though, that people do not know the dances or know why the Yucatecans dance the *jarana*. She feels that the beautiful dances in the *vaquería* are performed by the people and they should know what they all mean, historically and culturally.

Guadalupe describes the music and traditions as rich and extensive. She is one of the instructors who are proud to say that they can distribute color and richness to the Yucatán. While the Yucatecans are very happy, calm people, many locations in Mexico do not have the folklore or the dynamics of the people, like the Yucatecans. For that, she believes, they are grateful.

Though the *jarana* differs throughout the various states of the Yucatán, the different forms often have similarities. The music may be the same, but the dance steps differ slightly. Since the people of the peninsula are so close and similar, the dances that used to be separate entities have meshed, creating one dance.

Guadalupe teaches her students in a circle. She places herself in the center and shares the dance steps with the students. The students will then dance around the circle, practicing the movement in motion. This is also beneficial so the students may see the instructors’ (and their peers’) feet at different angles, creating a deeper memory of the steps. Guadalupe also enjoys teaching the students new dances. She uses many different CDs throughout a rehearsal, creating a wider knowledge base of the musical repertoire.
GLOSSARY

Ayuntamiento (de Mérida): Municipality of Mérida

Ballet Folklórico de Mérida: Folklore Ballet of Mérida

Bombas: Spoken poems of romantic, humorous, or historical context.

Botella: Bottle.

Canciones: Yucatecan songs.

Charola: Beverage tray.

Copla: Verse.

Hacienda: Plantation.

Huapaches: Dance sandals worn by men

Huipile: Traditional embroidered dress of Yucatecan women.

Jarana: regional dance and music style of the Yucatán Peninsula.

Jota: Traditional dance from Spain. It influenced the development of the jarana.

La Escuela Municipal de Folclore Regional de Mérida: The Regional Municipal School of Folklore of Mérida.

Mestizaje: mixture

Mestizo: Person of Spanish and Maya descent.

Paso: Step.

Periférico: Neighborhood.

Rebosos: Traditional shawl of Yuctecan women

Romances: Yucatecan songs of serenade.

Secretaría de Desarrollo Cultural: Secretary of Cultural Development.
Suerte: Luck.

Trova: Regional song genre of the Yucatán.

Zapateado: Dance step.

Vaquería: A collection of regional dances historically performed at the haciendas celebrating cattle branding.
Figure 24: “Las Mujeres Que Se Pintan”

Una Linda Americana,
cuando vino a Yucatán,
bailó una alegre jarana
bajo el arco de San Juan.  

A pretty American,
that came to the Yucatán,
danced a happy jarana
underneath the arch of San Juan.

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89 Torres, La Bomba Yucateca, 44.
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