Chiquinha Gonzaga
Mulatta Originator of Forerunners of the Samba

BY JOYCE CARLSON-LEAVITT

Edinha Diniz's fascinating biography of Chiquinha Gonzaga is an important step in the feminist agenda of publicizing the lives and works of neglected or misjudged “fore-mothers.” With this work, the Bahian sociologist aims to correct the erroneous biographies (written by men) that have tried to make this extraordinary, nonconformist woman “acceptable” to society by glossing over certain aspects of her life (Diniz 1984, 114). In reality, Francisca “Chiquinha” Hedviges Gonzaga de Amaral (1847–1935) was a daring, determined woman who overcame great obstacles to become Brazil’s first woman composer and one of the principal originators of the music that evolved into the samba (Appleby 1983, 77).

Chiquinha Gonzaga, a talented mulatta, defied tradition in order to fulfill her musical abilities and ambitions. Struggling with family ostracism that even denied her access to her female children and with prejudices against women who participated in public life, Gonzaga finally won respect and acceptance.

Joyce Carlson-Leavitt is a visiting scholar of the Latin American Institute of the University of New Mexico where her specialty is Hispanic, Latin-American, and Brazilian women’s literature. Her dissertation was titled “Gilka Machado and Adella Prado: Two Brazilian Women Poets—Visions of the Female Experience” (University of New Mexico, 1989).

She was born on the margins of upper-class life as the illegitimate child of a mulatta woman and a high-class military man. Soon after birth she was recognized by her father; because of her mulatta appearance and the family’s disapproval of her father’s marriage, her father’s family was all the more insistent that she play the rigid, limiting upper-class female roles of society hostess and pampered wife and mother, and she received just enough education to undertake those roles.

Fortunately for Brazilian music, this education included piano lessons and a musical environment of recitals by relatives. From an early age, she excelled at the piano and even composed music while still a child. From the beginning, the family attempted to mold the strong-willed, independent, rebellious teenager into a society matron and eventually succeeded by marrying her “up” into a high-class family. A piano was both her dowry and her constant companion and consolation in (continued on 2)
Chiquinha Gonzaga (continued from 1) the stifling home environment. After the birth of three children, her jealous husband forced her to choose between the society life he offered and music. She chose music, was expelled from the family, denied access to her daughter and second son, and declared dead. According to Diniz (1984, 66, 67), since she was considered a pernicious influence on her daughter and her infant son, she was allowed to keep only her older son. (Her daughter was told that her grandparents were her parents and that her father was her uncle; the infant son was sent to be reared by a paternal uncle.)

Alone and ostracized, she pursued a career as a music teacher, composer, and musician in Rio de Janeiro at a time when women generally could not have a public life.

Bridging the Musical Gap

According to Diniz, in the second half of the nineteenth century, Rio de Janeiro was so filled with pianos that it was humorously called “pianopolis” (31). The instrument was an indispensable part of upper- and middle-class Rio social life, while in the lower classes the instruments were guitars, flutes, and cavaquinhos, small four-stringed guitars. Mestiço (mixed race) popular musicians, who usually played by ear, created a different—African—effect, spontaneously adding syncopated African drum rhythms to the European melodies, as was also done with the Spanish habanera and the Argentinean tango (Coelho 1994). Guillermoprieto (1990, 23, 26) tells us that the elite groups, who both loathed and were attracted to African culture, were very disturbed by these “tribal” threats to “civilization” and tried to prohibit public African drum sessions, or at least relegate them to the hills where many of these musicians lived.

The lundu, also popular in lower classes (predominately mestiço, mulatto, or black), inspired a similar love/hate relationship in the upper classes. The lundu was a sensual dance where the invitation to dance was the joining of navel (a umbigada). The combination of the polka and the lundu became a dance called the maxixe, or the Brazilian tango. The maxixe’s reputation for being indecent did not inhibit its popularity. Later the maxixe evolved into the samba, and some say that the word “samba” is derived from the Kimbundu word “semba,” to touch navels as an invitation to dance. In contrast to this African-influenced music, the European music that was played in musical theaters, bands, and small sweetshops was so popular that even carefully supervised women could attend these concerts during the day.

A bohemian lifestyle flourished on the fringes of “proper” society, and Gonzaga tried to make her way in this life, supporting herself by playing the piano and giving music lessons. When circumstances were particularly bad, she even advertised in a newspaper that she could teach anything. At that time, it was possible for a woman to get a position teaching “anything,” since women were desired as teachers for female students but had to be of upstanding morals, a requirement that Gonzaga often did not fulfill.

Forced to the margins of society by her circumstances, she naturally sensed the special qualities of the African-inspired popular music, and eventually she became one of the first to bridge the gap between the two musical cultures (Appleby 1983, 76, 77). Her compositions, along with those of Ernesto Nazaré and Joaquim Calado, were some of the earliest to effectively combine European and African elements. At that time the polka was her favorite European form, since it lent itself to fusion with the African lundu because of similarities of tempo and sensuality (Diniz 1984, 100).

Development of the Choro

Early in her career, Gonzaga fell passionately in love with a Rio bon vivant fan of music and dance, João Batista Carvalho. Social criticism and suggestions that the proud Gonzaga was a “kept woman” caused the couple to flee to a small town in the interior. Later, feeling that she was hindering his career, she left him and their infant daughter when she found him dancing with another woman. On her return to Rio after this disastrous liaison, Gonzaga found it necessary to restart her career,
although she was already an accomplished composer of polkas and a skilled pianist.

Fortunately, she found a mentor who appreciated her talent. The mestizo, Joaquim Antônio da Silva Calado Junior (1848–1880), was a flutist who also was moving in the direction of fusing popular African rhythms with socially acceptable European melodies. He did this in such a way that African innovations—still scorned by the elite—became more acceptable. For this purpose he created a special type of musical group consisting of flute, two guitars, and one cavaquinho. This combination of African innovations and European forms and playing style eventually evolved into the choro and is considered the first nationalization of popular music (100).

In the mid-nineteenth century, the term “choro” referred to certain instrumental groups who played polkas, waltzes, tangos, and other traditional European music in an emotional, syncopated, improvisational style (100–101). There are two probable origins of the use of this word for groups playing in this style. First, the word choro means “cry” in Portuguese and thus probably refers to the sentimentality of this style of playing. Second, the word choro is said to have come from the Afro-Brazilian word “xolo,” which McGowan and Pessanha (1991, 152) tell us referred to Afro-Brazilian dances and parties. One of the main instruments used for these was the charamela, a reed instrument that is a precursor of the clarinet (Buarque de Holanda 1986, 391) and was played by slaves (Coelho 1994). The term later came to refer to an instrumental group playing in a particular style rather than a particular type of music (Diniz 1984, 101).

The Calado/Gonzaga relationship was mutually beneficial. Calado’s support of the young, struggling musician helped launch her career as a professional, and Gonzaga, in turn, added the piano to Calado’s group at a time when a piano was sorely needed. She intuitively understood Calado’s original music, and her piano performances supported his innovations on the flute and his arrangements of the music. Through her collaboration with

Calado, Gonzaga became the first professional piano player to be associated with the choro, and in the process she transformed piano playing from mere decoration into liberation—her own! Her association with Calado and the success of her own compositions also made her popular throughout the city (104, 105). She was introduced into Rio’s elitist musical society when Calado dedicated his song “Querida por todos” (Loved by All) to the aspiring composer.

Calado’s premature death in 1880 forced Gonzaga to pursue even (continued on 4)
Chiquinha Gonzaga (continued from 3) more actively her mentor’s work of Afro-Brazilianizing popular music, and, according to Diniz (1984, 129) and Appleby (1983, 76, 77), this led to her being considered also one of the principal promulgators of this innovative genre, the choro. In fact, during the period between Calado’s death and the end of the century—a tumultuous time when African slaves gained their freedom and Brazil became a republic—Gonzaga’s work and Afro-Brazilianized music in general gained widespread public acceptance. It was in this period that she emerged as a composer of the majority of the most successful pieces of the period (Diniz 1984, 155).

Always the rebel, her first pieces were given such provocative titles as “Atraente” (Captivating), “Não insistas, rapariga!” (Don’t Insist, Wench!), “Harmonias do coração” (Harmonies of the Heart), and “Sedutor” (Seducer) (probably written in response to Calado’s “Seducora”) (111)—at a time when the titles of songs were associated with the composer’s character and friends’ lifestyles! According to Vasconcelos (1991, 267), these songs increased the hostility she experienced in the period when she suffered the most societal rejection, the years 1877–1885. Furthermore, from the beginning she was iconoclastic, even in her style of dress. For example, photographs of the time show her wearing silk scarves entwined in her hair instead of the customary hat. This so offended the prevailing good taste that once, as Gonzaga walked an important Rio avenue, an elegant woman tried to pull off this original decoration (Diniz 1984, 115).

**Gonzaga and Musical Theater**

Not only was Gonzaga one of the first composers to move Brazilian music toward the composition of a truly national, indigenous music through her fusion of European and African styles, but she was the first to use lower-class speech and customs in songs, the theater, and light opera (208–209). After Calado’s death, Gonzaga realized that she could not support herself by composing and teaching, so she turned to musical theater in order to reach a larger public.

As the cultural elites of Rio preferred lyric or dramatic theater, the urban lower classes demanded their own forms of entertainment, the musical theater. This type of theater was becoming Brazilianized at the same time as the
country’s dance music. At first it was called magazine theater (o teatro de revista), in which several events and personalities of the past year were presented. Happy, charming, and spirited music sustained the action and added decorative exuberance.

In 1880, although she was completely self-taught, Gonzaga wrote her own libretto for such a show and composed the music to accompany it. She created a love story filled with rural customs (130–132). Although this work, Festa de São João (The Feast of St. John), was neither published nor performed, it revealed Gonzaga’s audacity and determination, and it was a prelude to better works to come. Five years later, a work entitled Corte na Roça (Court in the Hinterlands), based on another’s libretto but with her own musical compositions, was presented. The work ended with a maxixe dance, which was censored by the police. Still, this first-produced theatrical piece by a woman was praised for its happy, spirited instrumentation and, especially, for its national character, its rhythms from popular songs and dances, and its touch of lasciviousness (134).

Gonzaga’s use of the maxixe for the final dance became an identifying characteristic of this type of spectacle, and the same intuitive capturing of popular taste, revealed in her songs and dances, now made her a much-sought-after composer of musical theater and especially of the final maxixe dances (135). These pieces were followed by various light operas such as Corta-Jaca, composed in 1895 and performed in the presidential palace for President Fonseca. The most famous song from this operetta is “Gaúcho,” a Brazilian tango or choro that was recorded as recently as 1975 by the great Brazilian flutist, Altamiro Carrilho (227, 366).

According to Diniz, in 1899 Gonzaga, always the innovator who brought the street into the salons, wrote the first song for a Carnival march of a particular Carnival group, the Rosa de Ouro. According to Diniz (1984, 184) and Vasconcelos (1991, 173–175), this popular marcha-rancha, “Ó abre alas! Que eu quero passar” (Oh, Open the Wings [of Dancers]! I Want to Go Through), is noteworthy because it was composed specifically for Carnival and definitively established the relationship between the marcha-rancha and Carnival songs. More important for Gonzaga’s musical career, this first song of its kind brought social recognition to the previously scorned street manifestations of Carnival and established a new genre that persists to this day. Another of her famous Carnival songs is “Forrobodó,” written in 1912 to verses by the young artists Carlos Bettancourt and Luiz Peixoto. This was part of a theater piece that caricatured the customs and speech of the lower classes. The malicious, sexual, popular language of this piece reveals the revolutionary nature of its words and themes. Furthermore, the later prudish censorship and rewriting of these lyrics parallel the rewriting of Gonzaga’s own biography. A comparison of some of the original and revised lyrics of the light opera Forrobodó, is revealing. Example 1 shows the original 1912 text, sung by the mulatta Zeferina. A later text, from 1961, reveals significant, prudish changes (see Ex. 2).

Example 1
Sou mulata brasileira,
Sou dengosa feiticeira
A flor do maracujá. (bis)
Minha mãe foi trepadeira,¹
E eu terrível e eu arteira
Vivo igualmente a trepá.

Pança com pança
Bate direito
Entra na dança,
Quebra com jeito. (bis)

Este maxixe
Quase que mata,
Não se enrabiche²
(continued on 6)

1. It is important to note the word play based on the dual meaning of “tre~padeira”: (1) climbing vine (like the maracujá), (2) one who has sexual intercourse, is sexually promiscuous.
2. Chamberlain and Harmon (1983): “enrabicharse” (colloq); to go crazy over, get a mad crush on.
Chiquinha Gonzaga (continued from 5)
Pela mulata. (bis) (Diniz 1984, 209)
-----
I am a Brazilian mulatta,
I am a coy bewitcher;
The passion flower. [pretty, sweet smelling 
flower on a vine associated with love]
My mother was a climbing
vine, [loose woman]
And I terrible and I cunning
I also live by “climbing.” [being a loose 
woman]
Belly to belly
Thump correctly
Enter into the dance,
Swing your hips skillfully.

This maxixe
Almost kills
Don’t get a crush on
The mulatta.

Example 2
Sou mulata brasileira
feiticeira
frutinha nacional.
Sou perigosa e matreira,
Sou arteira
Como um pecado mortal.
Pra provar o gostoso
delicioso
sabor que esta fruta tem
todo mundo anda ansioso
e que gulos
esta seu guarda também!

Quando eu danço no salão,
—que peixão!—
diz aquele que me vê
E eu vou girando o balão
como um pião
somente para moê! (Diniz 1984, 210)
-----
I am a Brazilian mulatta
bewitcher
little national fruit.
I am dangerous and shrewd,
I am cunning, mischievous
as a mortal sin.
To taste the sensually pleasurable
Delicious
Flavor that this fruit has
The whole world goes around anxious
and how gluttonous
Mr. policeman as well!
When I dance in the salon,
—what a buxom woman!—
says that man who sees me
And I go on spinning my hoop skirt
like a top
just to wipe them out!

A comparison with her more famous
contemporary, the composer Ernesto Nazaré,
further reveals Gonzaga’s revolutionary
attitude. Although coming from a lower class
and composing and playing choros and other
popular music, Nazaré always saw himself
as a classical musician and tried to be accepted as
such. Gonzaga, on the other hand, had no such
pretentions. Although she came from a fairly
high social class, she promulgated the scorned
music of the lower classes and finally had her
“lower class” compositions played for the elite
at the presidential palace.

Musical Acceptance
As Gonzaga approached middle age, she was
finally accepted in musical circles, even
though she traveled with a young male
companion she called her son. Still, despite, or
perhaps because of, her composition of music
for the popular theater and in spite of her
enhanced popularity from these compositions,
she was never allowed to return to her family;
but in the end, it was to her that her grown
daughters turned when they were in need.
Although she helped her now-penniless and
aged father, she suffered from his insistence to
the end that she had died many years ago. Only
her grown sons, who upon reaching adulthood
were free to see her, were part of her life, since
the daughters had long since been lost to her.
Thus, it is ironic that in a time when “good”
women were totally dependent on men,
Gonzaga supported herself and even some of
her rejecting family by composing and playing
the very popular music that they despised.
Because she was marginalized for her nonconformist behavior, she identified with other marginalized people and extended herself to help them. She was especially active in the abolitionist movement, even selling her music from door to door in order to buy the freedom of a slave. Her reaction to her own exploitation by those who gained financially from illicitly using her music without permission was to become a principal organizer of the Sociedade Brasileira de Artistas Teatrais (Brazilian Society for Theater Artists), a group formed to protect artists’ rights. Her contribution to this movement is emphasized by the festival given in her honor by the Sociedade in 1925 when she was seventy-eight years old (Diniz 1984, 252).

At the end of her life, she was recognized as a composer who radically changed Brazilian music into an authentic reflection of the various components of Brazilian life. This music, which evolved into the samba, finally became accepted by the higher class, which previously had scorned it. She was recognized as a woman who had made her way alone in a man’s world, a woman who had held true to her artistic and humanistic convictions in spite of prejudice and condemnation.

Edinha Diniz (185) summarizes Gonzaga’s contributions as a musician and as a woman when she associates her disobedience to musical conventions with her disobedience as a child to the societal norms for female behavior:

O facto de ter sido uma mulher a libertária da música popular tambéém é significativo. No caso de Chiquinha a desobediência foi a sua forma de contestar um poder que a esmagava. Não era muito diferente desobedecer um pai, um marido ou uma norma imposta. Ao mesmo tempo que se libertava ela libertava a música. Contrariamente a muitos compositores da época ela foge a alienação dominante. A sua obra distingue-se pela observância do que a rodeia, da captação do que é próximo e desta forma produz com originalidade, dando à música um toque brasileiro.

[The fact of a woman being the liberator of popular music is also significant. In the case of Chiquinha, disobedience was her form of answering to a power that crushed her. There was not much difference between disobeying a father or a husband and disobeying imposed musical norms. At the same time that she freed herself, she freed music. Contrary to many composers of the time, she fled the dominant alienation. Her work stands out because of her observation of what surrounded her, the capturing of what was nearby and in this way producing original works that gave her music a Brazilian touch.]

References
DURING THE WEEK of April 8–12, 1996, the school student intern, Jerome Calderon, participated as mentors in the ASPIRA Public Policy Leadership Program. ASPIRA Association, Inc., is a national non-profit organization with offices located in six states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. ASPIRA of Illinois has served and advocated on behalf of Puerto Rican and other Latino youth by providing leadership development and educational programs to thousands of Puerto Rican and Latino students in the Chicagoland area for more than two decades.

The CBMR and Project Kalinda became one of twenty organizations that served as mentors for this year’s program. Jerome Calderon, a junior at Providence-St. Mel High School in Chicago, was selected as the high school student intern. Jerome plans to attend college and pursue a degree in music and education. He plays the trumpet and is taking percussion lessons with Carlos Eguis-Aguila, percussionist with Ensemble Kalinda Chicago.

During his internship, Jerome was introduced to every facet of programs administered at the Center, from Project Kalinda to the International Dictionary of Black Composers project to the Rockefeller Fellowships Program. He did some preliminary research on Latin musicians and had a hands-on experience with materials collected by the CBMR Library. He also sorted and filed newspaper clippings from the Alton Augustus Adams collection.

Jerome had a resourceful and productive internship at the Center, and we wish him well as he pursues his educational goals.

ON JULY 21, 1996, the Puerto Rican composer Don Rafael Cepeda Atiles, “Patriarch of the Bomba and Plena,” died in Puerto Rico at the age of eighty-six. He left an important cultural legacy by perpetuating African-derived music and dance of bomba and plena. With his ensemble, the Cepeda Family, which consisted of his sons and daughters, he also presented this music-and-dance genre in countries throughout the world.

Don Rafael was a musician, a dancer, and a composer. He was the composer of the tune “El Bombom de Elena,” which was recorded by the famous Orchestra of Rafael Cortijo with Ismael Rivera on vocals. He also composed other tunes such as “Zumbador,” “Oigame Madame Kalulu,” and “Candela,” which were recorded by various artists. In 1945, Don Rafael recorded his first 78 rpm records with the group ABC and participated in the famous Puerto Rican radio program of Rafael Quinones Vidal. He also performed in a film produced in Santo Domingo entitled Cana Brava.

At his funeral the famous Puerto Rican singer Ruth Fernandez said about Don Rafael, “The master was an example of the conservation of the African heritage which is so strong. He maintained the traditions and taught them so they would not die. He did it so well that he had whites singing and dancing from the heart. Puerto Rico and the world are indebted to him.”

In 1980, Don Rafael made the following statement regarding his future death, “I do not want sadness to prevail, [do] not ever forget the bomba and plena. In front of my corpse do not come and say that the folklore has gone. No sir, only a piece is gone, but here a large part of the folklore stays. Why are we going to allow [that which] is ours to die? If I die, you will have to take me to the cemetery singing bomba and plena, with joy.”

Thank you, Don Rafael, for the wonderful joy you brought to many of us through your music and thank you for maintaining and preserving a piece of the Afro–Puerto Rican folklore. May you rest in peace.

CBMR and Project Kalinda Participate in Community Mentorship Program
I wrote this letter with great pleasure and pride. On August 27, 1996, I attended a concert entitled “Kaliente,” a music and dance performance presented by the Center for Black Music Research of Columbia College in Chicago, Illinois. It was very inspiring to listen to music of the diaspora performed with such energy, enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment. The concert, which included dance, was not only entertaining but also informative. It was very helpful for me to listen to the historical information given before each segment. It put the music and the dance into perspective, and I could enjoy what I was watching and listening to. All of the performing ensembles were dynamic. As a dancer, I was paying particular attention to the information given about the dance and its relationship to the geographic area from which the music came. The performance of the couple that danced to the music from Mexico accompanied by Sones de México Ensemble was striking. They were exceptional in their delivery and technically sound. Idabell Rosales, the young lady representing Cuba’s contemporary dances, was vibrant and did a great job dancing without a partner in dances for which partners play an important part. Ensemble Kalinda Chicago captivated the audience, as always. It was very insightful to round out the evening by the inclusion of guest artists whose performances included other geographic areas of the diaspora.

When I first heard of Project Kalinda and started to receive the newsletter, I was determined to travel to Chicago to attend a performance. I did just that with my family. We also learned how Project Kalinda worked with the community and reached out to the people of the diaspora in the Chicago community. It was enough to motivate and stimulate us to support your programs as much as possible and start our own outreach here in Indianapolis, Indiana.

I look to Kalinda! for information, resources, references. They are very valuable in my own research in dance and music of the diaspora. Often common roots of music and dance of the diaspora are not explored to foster understandings between people of African descent in the new world. Project Kalinda has been a leader and opened the doors and the minds of many to embrace what brings us together.

I am looking forward to new projects from the Center for Black Music Research. Hopefully, Project Kalinda can continue its research and important outreach programs in the Chicago community and outside as well.

Michael Orlove
City of Chicago,
Department of Cultural Affairs

Thank you, Center for Black Music Research, for initiating Ensemble Kalinda Chicago! The debut of this marvelous group several years ago was met with much enthusiasm. The group contains a unique element that is missing from most musical presentations today... educational outreach.

Too often, many of us forget how much can be learned through music. Various compositions and interpretations of songs reveal the rich history and traditions that embody a certain cultural or ethnic group. Ensemble Kalinda helped me and many others learn a great deal about the commonalities of African, Caribbean, and Latin-American music.

Hats off to the Center for Black Music Research and Ensemble Kalinda Chicago for creating such an effective educational group. I look forward to future presentations.
The Eleggua Project
Sponsors
Cuban Workshops

The Eleggua Project is a cooperative partnership of North American and Cuban non-governmental agencies with a shared interest in developing opportunities to study in Cuba. The project is financially dependent on program fees and volunteer service and refuses financial support from any government in order to remain apart from the implications of politics. The project's name honors the orisha Eleggua, who opens pathways to be explored. The Eleggua Project ensures that all aspects of study, travel to Cuba, and travel within the country are facilitated for United States professionals, researchers, and students.

These workshop and field research opportunities are designed to provide comprehensive programs of study in the Afro-Cuban music, dance, and history of either the eastern region (Santiago, Guantanamo) or the central region (Matanzas, Jovellanos, Havana) of Cuba. Coursework will include studio study (technique classes), lectures, performance viewing, and field trips in order to provide authentic context and optional participation in performance events. Course instructors and lecturers are members of the AFROCUBA and Cutumba folklore ensembles.

Principle cities are Santiago de Cuba, Guantanamo, Baracoa, Matanzas, Havana, and Jovellanos, with an additional Haiti option in the June/July session. Areas of study include folkloric/religious areas (Cuban-Haitian, Cuban-Kongo/Bantu, and Cuban-Yoruba) and popular/secular musics (son, rumba, conga, changui, and nengón). Emphasis will be placed upon the stylistic differences that give each idiom its unique voice and the traditional symbiotic relationship of music, dance, and song. Ensemble and small group instruction will be available for instrumentalists. Lectures and field trips will enhance the coursework. Participants are invited to a peña, joint performance opportunities, and the opening procession of Fiesta del Fuego.

Workshop Dates
December 28 to January 4 or 11, 1997 (Santiago and Guantanamo)
March 1 to March 8 or 15, 1997 (Santiago and Guantanamo)
March 15 to March 22 or 29, 1997 (Matanzas, Jovellanos, and Havana)
June 21 to July 5 or 12, 1997 (Santiago and Guantanamo, including the Fiesta del Fuego and the option of travel to Haiti and Baracoa)

Those with time or date constraints may also join sessions during the second week (excluding the June 22–July 5 session). This option must be requested at time of registration.

Fees
Two-week program, $1,600; one-week program, $1,200; the Haiti-Baracoa option added to the summer session (eight days), $2,400. Fees include

- Round trip airfare to/from Santiago or Matanzas from Toronto (direct flight), Cancun, or Nassau (arrive Havana with domestic connections to/from Santiago or Matanzas) (Due to undependable flight schedules, forced overnight stays in or out of Havana may be necessary at additional cost)
- Seven to fourteen or twenty-one nights accommodations, double occupancy in
mostly air-conditioned rooms with private bath, breakfast and dinner daily

* Workshop registration (twenty-five hours per week)
* Coordination of visits and exchanges, translators, local facilitators
* Transportation by modern air-conditioned bus
* Cuban visa (processing of U.S. travel license application upon request)

Academic Advisors
James Lepore (Dance); University of Washington; e-mail: lepore@u.washington.edu

Francisco Mora (Music); Michigan State University; e-mail: moraf@pilot.msu.edu

College credit is available from the University of Washington or from Michigan State University.

For registration package and more information, contact Jonathan Watts, Executive Director or Field Studies Coordinator Eleggua Project 7171 Torbram Road, Suite 51 Mississauga (Toronto), Ontario Canada L4T 3W4 Telephone 905-678-0426; fax 905-678-1421; e-mail cancuba@pathcom.com Web: http://www.pathcom.com/~cancuba

AFROCUBA de Matanza Begins Their 1996 Tour in Chicago

On the weekend of August 10, 1996, the group AFROCUBA de Matanzas began their two-month tour of the United States and Canada by providing several performances and workshops in the city of Chicago. AFROCUBA de Matanzas is one of Cuba's most acclaimed Afro-Cuban folklore groups. It performs traditional African dances, percussion, and songs that still flourish as an integral part of Cuba's living legacy. The sold-out Chicago audiences were delighted with AFROCUBA's performance and welcomed them warmly on this their first tour of the United States since 1988.

The city of Matanzas was founded by the Spanish in 1693, and from that date until the abolition of slavery in Cuba in 1880, a great number of Africans were brought there as slaves. AFROCUBA de Matanzas was founded in 1957 in the Pueblo Nuevo district of Matanzas.

Francisco Zamora Chirino (Minini) is one of the founders of the group and is its artistic director, vocalist, and percussionist. On August 13, 1996, Mr. Chirino and Lisa Maria Salb, tour director, visited the CBMR's facilities and met with the staff. They were impressed by the Center's library and by the computerized system that keeps track of information from around the world.

Mr. Chirino and Ms. Salb stress that Matanzas is a special place where African traditions have been maintained through cultural and spiritual mutual aid societies called cabildos. These societies, initially made up of members of particular African ethnic groups, were sanctioned by the Spanish government and the Catholic Church. The cabildos allowed the various ethnic groups from Africa (Yoruba, Dahomey, Bantu, Calabari, and others) to maintain their religious and artistic traditions. According to Mr. Chirino, "almost all of the cabildos had a Catholic patron saint who symbolically represented the African deity who was the true patron of the cabildo, a manifestation of the syncretization of the African religion with aspects of the Catholic church."

Many of the cabildos, which were founded 150 to 200 years ago, are still in existence in Matanzas. Every member of AFROCUBA de Matanza is also a member of one or more of the oldest cabildos. They are true practitioners of the traditions they perform.
The Habanera (continued from 14)

The “ritmo de tango”
Speculation abounds as to the origin of the ritmo de tango. The term “tango” here predates the Argentinean genre; it was used in Spain and Cuba as a general term for a gathering of black slaves that included dancing, much as the term "lunlu" was used in Brazil. According to Galán, the ritmo de tango appears in one of the Cantigas of Spanish king Alfonso X (1221–1284) and is also found in the Arabic majari. Helio Orovio casually claims it to be “of Bantu origin;” H. V. Hamilton says it supposedly derived from Creole or Negro tunes called tonones. Whatever the origin, it is hard to imagine African musicians not having this comparatively simple pattern in their repertoire; it may have spread from black Africa to the Arabs and from there to Spain.

What is certain is that the rhythm was introduced by black musicians, what Carlos Vega calls their “way of doing.” Perhaps more importantly, what gives the contradanza criolla (as the Cuban version came to be known) its African flavor is its “obsessive” use of this rhythm. The first known contradanza criolla, “San Pascual Bailón” (1803), already featured the ritmo de tango.

It is said that the contradanza in Havana developed a more elegant, genteel flavor than its counterpart in the eastern part of the island. Somehow the Havana style became more popular, and soon the contradanza criolla came to be known, especially overseas, as the contradanza habanera. When lyrics were added to it, it became the “canción habanera,” and, eventually, it was simply called “habanera.” Its development paralleled that of other songs in the Americas whose origins are popular dances.

The habanera became hugely successful in the Americas and overseas. The earliest known habanera is “La pajita,” written in 1836; the use of the ritmo de tango in later piano compositions helped to spread it to the United States. “La paloma” (The Dove), written by Basque composer Sebastián Yradier (1809–1869) in 1859, became an internationally known composition, particularly popular in Mexico. Yradier later wrote “El arreglito” (1864), which Bizet included in his opera Carmen under the title of “Habanera.”

Sailors and theater companies spread the habanera within the Americas and overseas. In Argentina during the late nineteenth century, it mixed with the milonga to generate the tango; in Mexico it developedinto the “habanera de salón” and spread north to the United States.

The influence of the habanera on U.S. music has been mentioned by several authors. John Storm Roberts quotes Gilbert Chase, pointing out similarities between the habanera rhythm and the U.S. cakewalk, the basis of much ragtime phrasing. Roberts continues, “Gottschalk interweaves both versions in [“Ojos criollos”] . . . written forty years before ragtime appeared.” In the 1880s, Baltimore pianist Jesse Pickett used a habanera rhythm for his composition “The Dream,” and in a 1938 recording Jelly Roll Morton effortlessly transforms “La paloma” into a ragtime piece.

Meanwhile, in Cuba the habanera had declined in popularity, supplanted by the danzón and other, later genres. Its popularity has remained high in Spain, particularly in Catalonia, where it is often sung in catalan and

---

1. Some performers feel that this transcription is an approximation of the rhythm and that it is actually somewhere between a triplet and a dotted-eighth; as with many other black-influenced genres in the Americas (not to mention African music), we are once again confronted with the difficulty of transcribing “swing.”
where an annual habanera festival regularly
draws crowds of 30,000; but its ritmo de tango
can still be heard in genres all over the
world—wherever melancholy and longing
are felt.

Bibliography
Grove dictionary of music and musicians,
edited by Stanley Sadie, 4:703–705.
London: Macmillan.
Valencia, Spain: Pre-Textos/Música.
Grove dictionary of music and musicians,
edited by Stanley Sadie, 8:8. London:
Macmillan.
Johnson, James Weldon, ed. 1925. The book
of American Negro spirituals. New York:
Viking.
León, Argeliers. 1984. Del canto y el tiempo.
Havana: Letras Cubanas.
Montsalvatge, Xavier, comp. 1948? Album de
habaneras. Barcelona: Barna.
Morton, Jelly Roll. La paloma. The Library of
Congress recordings, vol. 4: Creepy
feeling . . . . Riverside RLP 9004.
Nketia, J. H. Kwabena. 1974. The music of
Africa. New York: W. W. Norton.
Orovio, Helio. 1981. Diccionario de la
música cubana, biográfico y técnico.
Havana: Letras Cubanas.
———. 1994. Música por el Caribe. Santiago
de Cuba: Oriente.
Pagès i Cassá, David. 1995. Havaneres a
Calella de Palafrugell. Avui July 3:15.
Roberts, John Storm. 1979. The Latin tinge:
The impact of Latin American music in the
United States. Tivoli, N.Y.: Original
Music.
Salinas Rodríguez, José Luis. 1994. Jazz,
flamenco, tango: Las orillas de un ancho
río. Madrid: Catriel.

Ensemble Kalinda
Chicago

DURING THE PAST YEAR, Ensemble Kalinda
Chicago performed several times in the
Chicago area. In January 1996, the group
performed at the Bismarck Hotel for the
prestigious Chicago Jazz Fair; in February, it
performed at the Chicago Historical Society, on
Navy Pier as a component of its Black History
Month programming, and at Columbia
College’s Hokin Center; in March, at the
Chicago Hilton and Towers as part of the
Columbia College Dance Center’s Danzahoy!
festival; in July, for Chicago Inroads; and two
outdoor performances in July and August for
the Chicago Park District.

The group presented its most ambitious
performance to date on August 27, 1996, at
Navy Pier. The program featured guest soloists
Charles Cameron and Raphaël Benito and two
guest ensembles—Sones de México Ensemble
and Del Sur y del Caribe, a Chicago-area batá
group. About this performance, Chicago
Tribune arts critic Howard Reich wrote
“Though it’s not yet 2 years old, Ensemble
Kalinda Chicago appears to be taking its
place among the more important musical
organizations in the city. That much was
apparent not only from the capacity crowd
that packed the Skyline Stage at Navy Pier
. . . but also from the instrumental virtuosity
and stylistic authority that Ensemble
Kalinda produced as if by nature.”

The latest EKC performance was co-
presented on November 29 by the Jazz Institute
of Chicago and the Museum of Contemporary
Art. Titled “Clave: The Roots of Latin
Rhythms,” the event featured guest soloist
Jerry Gonzalez, who is the leader of TheFort
Apache Band.

The Chicago Community Trust recently
awarded an additional $25,000 grant in
continued support for Project Kalinda, and
the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur
Foundation’s two-year commitment to support
the project is continuing.
“The habanera... became the anthem for nostalgia and passionate feelings.”

(Joan Pericot)

When I met Armand Beneyto this spring he had just arrived home from the hospital two days earlier, but he spoke enthusiastically. “I have a little archive of things I have collected,” he said. These included many program books, essays, newspaper clippings, conference transcripts, and a compilation of habaneras, all collected during Mr. Beneyto’s decades-long career as a habanera performer. There was also a catalogue of local habanera ensembles—more than seventy. The funny thing is that we were some six thousand miles from Havana: we were at Mr. Beneyto’s home in Catalonia, in Northeastern Spain.

This was not the first time the habanera had traveled. On its “suitcase” it can boast stickers from Mexico, the United States, France, Spain, and much of South America, particularly Brazil and Argentina, where it met with the milonga to generate the tango. Its parents had traveled from Africa and Europe to Cuba, where it was born sometime in the early nineteenth century. Writing in 1925, James Weldon Johnson called it “one of the best known and most extended musical forms”; John Storm Roberts considers it “in the long run probably the most influential of all” Cuban styles to reach U.S. shores.

“Habanera” is short for contradanza or danza habanera, that is, a [country] dance in the style of Havana; although it is not clear that it was actually born in Havana. Its European lineage is well documented. It started with the seventeenth-century English country dance introduced at the French court during the mid-1680s and later became the very popular contredanse. The contredanse consisted of one eight-bar section repeated over and over; consequently throughout its history, alternative figures and rhythms were often used to avoid monotony. From France it spread to other countries in Europe, including Spain, whose version (contradanza) was already known in Cuba by the end of the eighteenth century. But France also exported it to Haiti, and it was this version, brought to Cuba by French refugees during the Haitian revolution (1803–1806), that became more popular in Cuba than the Spanish version.

In Cuba, black musicians (who were so much preferred that a Cuban author writing in 1800 complained that “the arts... are in the hands of people of color”) began shifting the accents of the contradanza. Eventually a lilting pattern (see example on page 12) often occurring in the bass, the “ritmo de tango,” permeated the performances. The contradanza also evolved from a group dance into a couples’ dance.

Marcos Sueiro, a musician and graduate of Columbia College, is the assistant librarian of the CBMR library.

(continued on 12)