CARÁNGANO AND WOMEN: STORY OF AN INSTRUMENT THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION

By

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Abstract: This article describes the results of an ethnomusicological study on the carángano, a ground bow instrument played only by women in the small villages of the Colombia Caribbean region. Before the introduction of electricity, the inhabitants contemplated the full moon as the women played, danced and laughed to the sound of this instrument. This instrument is now almost extinct. In this article, the social function, organological structure and repertoire of this instrument are analysed. The relationship between the carángano and other ground bows such as the tingo-talango or the dumbu-kalinga and sekituleghe on the American and African continents is discussed. These musical practices require urgent attention since they harbour musical and identification values belonging to the Colombian Caribbean region while sharing cultural aspects which connect Africans and African descendants across vast distances.

Keywords: Carángano, Colombian Caribbean region, ground bow, women, African roots, intangible cultural heritage, trans-Atlantic.

Background[1]

The adventure with this instrument began when Professor Julio C. Cassiani asked my class for the meaning of a strange word, "*carángano*[2]." One of the responding students defined this term, following Ortega, as belonging to an insect of the family of hemiptera or lice (1971). Later, I discovered that carángano was a rare musical instrument described by List (2012), Bermúdez (1985) and Perdomo (1980)[3]. When I had the opportunity to talk with musicians who play this type of ground bow in Colombia and Africa, I found out the true meaning of this special word.

[1] The Raíz (root) research group associated with the Universidad Reformada in Barranquilla, Colombia, conducted the first stage of this research. This group consisted of Dr. Julio C. Cassiani, mentor of the project, Dr. Ángela Marín, Guido Genes, producer, and Andrea Trujillo, a Masters degree candidate. The second stage included Dr. Rafael M. Castilla from Universidad Internacional de la Rioja and the audiovisual producer, Lorena Vargas.

[2] I dedicate this paper to the performers of the ground bow anywhere in the world. I give special thanks to Petrona Monterrosa, Martha Valero, and Arminda Pérez in San Antonio de Palmito, also to Juana de Dios Molinares in Chorrera, Felicidad Jimenez in Hibacharo and Josefina Ferrer de Imitola in Piojó. I thank Sarah Kyasooka, a tenacious and kind woman who works for the well-being of many children and women in Kampala, Uganda, and Mtumbateka Mamatsharaga in Thohoyandou, South Africa, a

wise and honourable man who has dedicated his life to the preservation of the cultural legacy of the Vha Venda community. This article was made possible through the work and friendship of the Raíz research group, especially Julio Cassiani and Ángela Marín in the company of my partner and friend, Guido Genes. I extend my gratitude to David Evans and Dave Dargie for their kind advice, and Lee Watkins and Bernhard Bleibinger for their patience and recommendations. This paper came into fruition as a result of the Second Bow Music Conference convened by Sazi Dlamini at the University of Kwazulu Natal from 28 August to 2 September 2018. Lastly, I thank my family and friends around the world who helped me along the way in many different ways.

[3] In Colombia there are two types of carángano. One of these is played in Huila, Tolima, Valle del Cauca and Chocó and it is called carángano de bolillo. This instrument is a simple chordophone performed in a percussive style; it may have an idiophonic effect by filling a dried animal bladder with dry stones or seeds.

Carángano

According to Lawergren, the ground bows "are similar to hunting traps where a large hole in the ground, along the animal's path, is covered by some membrane-like material (bark, skin, and so on)" (1988: 35). In the case of carángano, the resonating body follows this description. However, in many towns in Colombia, it can also be a wooden box or a metallic cylinder. The string can be made of plant materials or wire and is suspended between a flexible branch or wooden column to the middle of the resonating body (see Figure 1).

The *carángano* is an artisanal instrument. It does not have a standardised form of construction as the materials and dimensions depend on the taste of the performer.

Figure 1. C*arángano* played by Arminda Pérez. Photograph by Juan Djanon.

However, the main structure consisting of the support, string, and resonating body, is always the same. Traditionally, the performers categorise the instruments by their resonating body, dividing them into three classes of *carángano*: hole in the ground, wooden box, and metal cylinder (see Figure 2, pp. 10). [4]In many cases, the musicians prefer a deep hole to produce a lower and deeper sound. Others prefer to build a smaller wooden box, to obtain more brilliant tones. And in other cases they prefer using a metal cylinder because it is easy to carry. It is important to mention that the Raíz research group also found a flexible branch being used as a means of structural support in the town of San Antonio de Palmito.

To understand the *carángano*, it is important to know about the towns of the Colombian Caribbean region[5]. Although pavements are found in most of these villages in the region, dirt roads are very common, as are large backyards where families have small fields and keep animals. The instrument is built in the backyard. Like most Latin-American towns, there is a main square where the church and the townhall are located, and around them are the homes of the people[6]. The Raíz research group found the instrument in 19 towns of the Colombian Caribbean. They identified the ground *carángano* in eleven of these, the wooden box instrument in six and the metallic cylinder instrument in two communities (see Figure 2). In most of these places these days, the inhabitants did not know about the instrument and the *carángano* was no longer being played. In many places, the instrument is like a myth as *carángano* performers have become scarce.

It is difficult to establish an approximate date for the arrival of the *carángano* in the Colombian Caribbean. At this moment the oldest record of this instrument is by Fals Borda who found it in a little town called *Chimá* at the end of the eighteenth century. The social and religious leader, Domingo Vidal, and his sisters, learned to play the *cárangano* (Borda 2002). In 1945, Perdomo published the first edition of *The History of Music* in Colombia, in which the author documented the *carángano* in the city of Cartagena, describing it as an instrument made of an upside-down drawer and a wire string. Perdomo mentioned that the carángano works like a bass

(Bermúdez 1985). This instrument has a resonant body made of guadua cane (*Guadua angustifolia*). Cane strips are mounted on bridges, acting as strings that are struck or rubbed. The other *carángano* is located in the Colombian Caribbean region, to which this research, has been dedicated. For an example see C*arángano de bolillo* by Los alegres en cucamba (2015): https://youtu.be/kLEc57VLmC0

[4] Concerning this type of carángano the hole is always empty and it is covered by a sheet of metal.

[5] Colombia is a country with six territorial regions and a wide cultural diversity. The Caribbean region is located to the north of the country and is constituted by the departments of Atlántico, Bolívar, Cesar, Córdoba, Guajira, Magdalena and Sucre.

[6] San Antonio de Palmito is a town in Colombia's Caribbean region: see https://vimeo.com/314114536

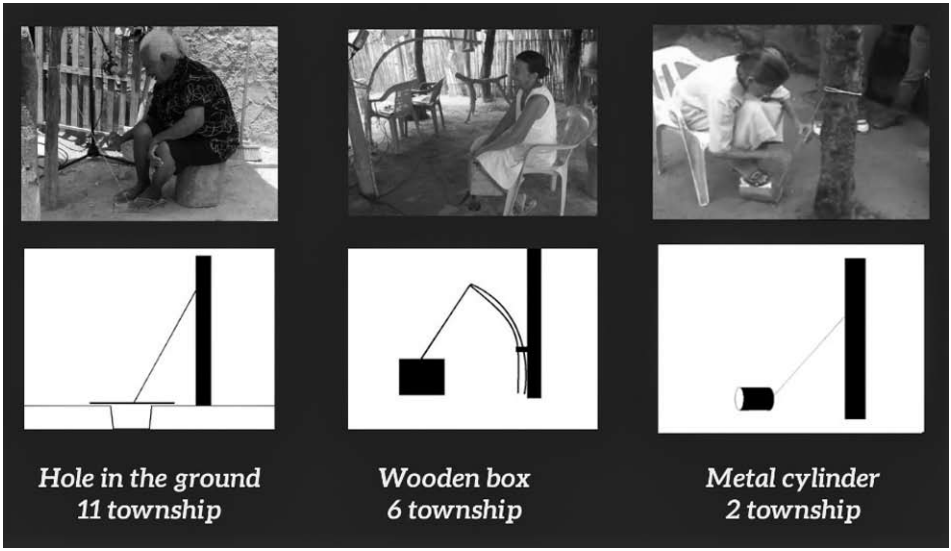

Figure 2. C*arángano* types. From left to right: Felicidad Jimenez, Martha Valero and Juana de Jesús Molinares. Photographs and images by Trujillo (et al. 2014).

instrument (1980). In 1964, George List visited Colombia and found this instrument in Mahates and Carmen de Bolivar. List noted that the *carángano* seemed the only instrument in the region played by women, and that this instrument was falling out of use in the region (List 2012).

The social functions of the *carángano* are linked to women, as they are the main performers of this instrument. Generally, in traditional Colombian towns, the life of a woman takes place in her home, especially in a kitchen built in the backyard. The backyards adjoin one another, allowing communication between women of the same and neighbouring blocks. Formerly, younger girls learned to play the instrument by observing and imitating their sisters, mothers and aunts. With the arrival of modern amenities like electricity, radio, and television between the 1930s and 1970s, the younger generations lost interest in this instrument. Martha Valero, a *carángano* player, explained that she learned to play it at the age of 10 by imitating the movements of her sister, but her daughters and granddaughters did not seem interested in learning how to play the *carángano* (Trujillo et al. 2014). The carángano players said that they learned to play the rhythm of the *sones*[7] (songs) by repeating the names of these songs, because the accentuation and pronunciation of the words match the rhythmic patterns of the music[8].

The *carángano* was played between the months of September and December, being heard in some places until the sixth of January (*ibid.*). The reasons for

this phenomenon are not clear, but many theories linked this instrument to the summer season; as there was no rain, people could build the instrument easily in their backyards. In San Antonio de Palmito most of the informants mention that September is the month of the carángano. Social integration is another reason to play the instrument. At Christmas time families and friends meet to share meals and traditional music. Between December and January, Colombia celebrates the candles day, the Advent Novena, Christmas day (celebrated the night of the twenty-fourth December), New Year and the Epiphany on the sixth of January[9]. The latter date marks the end of the Christmas holidays, vacations and the carángano time.

In most communities, *carángano* is considered a percussive solo instrument, but there are two exceptions. The first one is in the town of Carmen de Bolivar, where List (2012) discovered the *carángano* being used to accompany a singer. The second was registered by Pérez (2009) in the township of Salamina, where he found the *carángano* within a traditional music ensemble. In both cases, this practice no longer exists. In the words of one of the cultural leaders of the town of San Antonio, during the carángano season, a "*carángano* symphony", that is, a musical conversation took place in villages of the region. One performer started the musical conversation from her backyard by playing the *carángano* while the other players listened to her and joined (Cultural Leader, 29 September 2014). All the people of the town could hear the sounds of the instruments coming from different backyards in a call and response form[10].

This musical structure, in which a soloist makes a call and a group emits a response, repeating the same phrase of the soloist or singing the chorus of the musical piece, is present in many traditional musical genres such as the *Bullerengue*, *Tambora*, or *Chalupa* of the Colombian Caribbean region. This phenomenon goes back to the African call and response form, explained by Ekwueme:

> This response may be identical with the call or it may be a different answer which occurs regularly at specific intervals. We have shown that there may be

[7] *Son* is the traditional name that the *carángano* players give to a short musical piece, consisting of a theme and variations.

[8] In the next link is a video of the son named *Te mato un pato* (I kill a duck for you). In this case the name of the song matches the music. See https://vimeo.com/263021501

[9] The Catholic calendar registers the celebration of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, but for most of the people of the country, especially on the north coast, this day is known as the "Candles day" (*Día de las velitas*). On the night of the seventh and the early morning of the eighth, people light candles to honour St. Mary.

[10] For an example of the *carángano* call and response form, see https://vimeo.com/314093005

> artistic embellishments such as the overlapping (real or implied) of call and response sections (1975: 28).

At one point, the overlapping in the *carángano* music created a network of sound in which it was difficult to identify the individual melody of the participating instruments.

The names of the sones relate to everyday elements such as food. For example, there is the son, *La Panelita*[11] , which refers to a small brown block made from processed sugar cane, or, animals, and the son, *Caballito Corrento*[12] , (Running Horse) which imitates the gallop of a horse. *Sones* are also named after local plants such as the *Catalina Yanten* or *Yerba Buena y Toronjill*. Names also refer to humorous themes, such as *La Pinga e' Pucho*[13] (Pucho's Penis) or *Culo con Culo San Andres* (Ass with Ass San Andres). The instrumentalists used these names in the sense of a game. This performance practice occurs with other traditional instruments like the drums, where the players, mostly men, learn the rhythmic patterns by using vulgar words. As explained by Escamilla: "The people of the coast don't need euphemisms to refer to taboo situations (…) people use words in different situations without a sense of modesty" (1986: 11). In the case of the *carángano* players, our research group saw in their expressions a mixture of playfulness and innocence. One of the answers we received was from Martha Valero who said, "I don't know (about the names) when I opened my eyes (when she was born), the names were there" (Trujillo et al. 2014: 35). A total of twenty-six *sones* have been identified. Seventeen are based on objects belonging to the local environment, seven are humorous and two compositions were made by their players on the spot.

The afternoon, particularly closer to sunset, was the favourite moment to play the instrument. At this time of the day, the women would have finished their domestic work, the children would be playing and their husbands would be outside. They could be alone with the neighbours and share, without any pressure, their experiences and feelings. They could laugh and make jokes, and the *carángano* was there for accompanying those special moments. That time was destined to break the heavy routine of obligations and tasks; as Borda comments, "work is work so that it is not remunerated, and women (Caribbean) usually carry a double daily burden that few recognise" (2002: 49b). Performance was an activity, which permits the women to enjoy themselves in the company of their friends, through expressive and musical

[11] *La Panelita*: https://vimeo.com/263016464

[12] *Caballito Corrento*: https://vimeo.com/263005255

[13] *La Pinga e' Pucho*: https://vimeo.com/263009166

codes, which only they understand. Unconsciously, the *carángano* music allowed women to express their feelings about aspects they normally would not talk about, such as their sexual experiences.

AFRICAN ROOTS

Many well-known authors and institutions, such as Djenda (1968), Kruger (1989) and The Royal Museum for Central Africa (2016)[14], paid attention to the social function of the African ground bows, mentioning that this type of instrument is generally used as a solo instrument, and played recreationally by children and young people during cattle grazing and hunting. In many publications the magical element is highlighted as a means of protection provided by the spirits or communication with them (Bebey 1975, Kruger 1989, Royal Museum for Central Africa 2016).

Currently, Kyker is developing an interesting project on African ground bows. She mentions that this type of instrument "has been played across much of sub-Saharan Africa, making it one of the most widely distributed instruments on the African continent" (2019). One of the ground bows that she studied is the *kambuya-mbuya*[15] or *dzikamunhenga* in Zimbabwe. Sekuru Chigamba, one of the performers of this instrument, recalls that the "*Kambuya-mbuya* was played by people who herded the cattle. Even girls who went with the cows, and herding cattle, could play. It is something for young children" (Kyker 2019).

In this sense, Kruger mentions "boys and girls performing on, and dancing to the music of a ground-bow in Zimbabwe. However, in the Venda social context the instrument was apparently only in the domain of boys, particularly those around the age of puberty" (1989). Additionally, children of the Shangana-Tsonga community[16] play games before or after the rainy season, when the ground is firm enough and light subsistence activities such as herding cattle can take place (Johnston 1987). The habit of activities taking place "when the ground is firm enough" recalls the relationship of the *carángano* with the summer season. About the herding of cattle, Johnston observes:

Prior to the harvest (…), boys are too distant to participate in certain of the girls' musical activities, for they must travel in search of good grazing. Some of the boys'

[14] DEKKMMA Digitization of the Ethnomusicological Sound Archive of the Royal Museum for Central Africa: http://music.africamuseum.be/english/index.html

[15] To know more and listen to the instrument click on this link: http://kyker.digitalscholar.rochester.edu/kambuya-mbuya/

[16] Present in the southeast of Zimbabwe, south of Mozambique, and north of South Africa.

games, such as riding on the backs of cattle deliberately maddened with wasp stings - are too rough for girls, plus the fact that tribal taboos keep girls away from cattle at certain times (1987: 126-127).

At this point, there is not an apparent link between the *carángano* and the herding of cattle; in Colombia, the instrument is a domestic one, where the presence of women is stronger. Mothers, aunts, and sisters spent more of their time at home, transforming the performance of the instrument into a gendered activity.

At the International Bow Music Conference in 2018, held at UKZN in Durban, I had the fortune to meet Mr. Mtumbateka Mamatsharaga, a cultural and musical leader of the Venda community. He lives in a village near Thohoyandou which is close to Zimbabwe and Mozambique. When he was a boy, he learned to play the *dumbu-kalinga*[17], a special instrument that brings back the memories of his family and the ancient traditions that are currently in decline. This photograph in Figure 3 was taken in September 2018, around 30 years after he stopped playing this

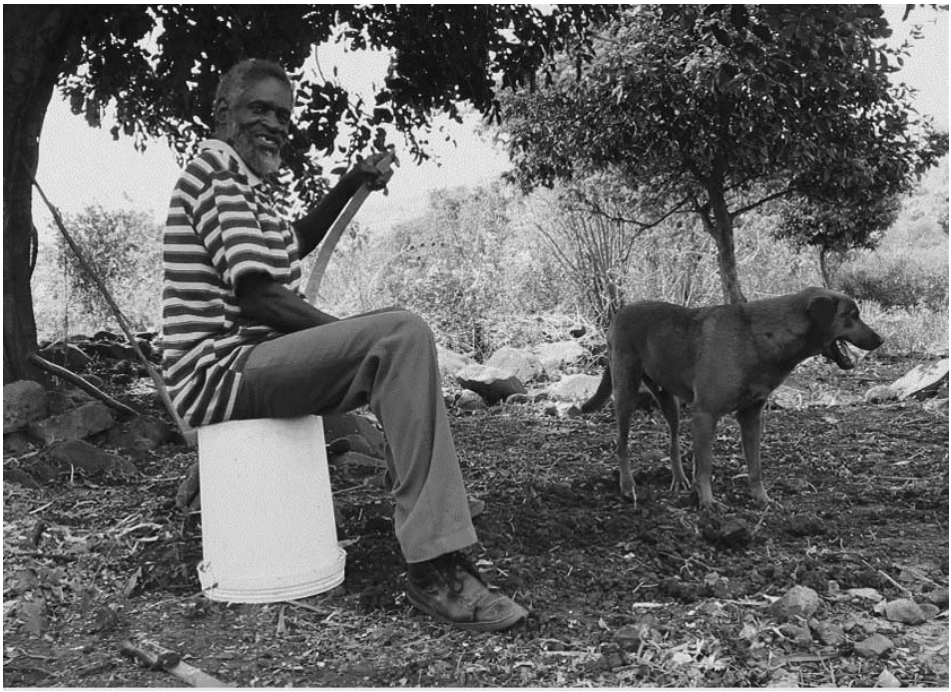

Figure 3. *Dumbu-Kalinga* played by Mtumbateka Mamatsharaga. Photograph by Author.

[17] This is the same instrument noted by Kruger almost twenty years earlier.

instrument. Mr. Mamatsharaga confirmed that cattle herders, usually boys, played this ground bow. He mentioned that the men of the community gathered with the chief to share traditional beer and play the music of the *dumbu-kalinga*. On special occasions, they solved family conflicts by performing on this instrument. He said that he did not know anybody else who played this instrument (Interview 7 September 2018).

Mr. Mamatsharaga commented that the word *carángano* is similar to a traditional expression, used to introduce a folk tale. At that moment, I did not understand the words that he pronounced, but I could hear the similarity with the name of the instrument in Colombia. Months later, when I was studying Johnston's article, I found the following information that reminded me of this curious expression:

> Garingani wa garingani is a phrase used by the northerly Tsonga to introduce a folktale, rather like "Once upon a time." It is generally answered with "*Garingani!*" In the Eastern Transvaal one more frequently hears "*Garingani wagaringa!*" with the response, "*Garinga!*" In Mozambique the phrase is "*Karingana wa karingana!*" and answered with "*Karingana!*"
> (Johnston 1987: 129).

There is no evidence about a direct relationship between these African expressions and the Colombian instrument but note the similarity between the words karingana and *carángano*, as a starting point for future research.

Before departing from Tohoyando, I showed Mr. Mamatsharaga videos of the carángano. He was very excited to see an instrument that is similar to the *dumbu-kalinga*, on the other side of the ocean. He promised to play and share the *dumbu-kalinga* with the people who want to learn about the instrument. He made a carángano in his backyard and wants to travel to Colombia to meet the performers of this instrument. I promised to share with all the people I could the value of the *dumbu-kalinga* and the Venda traditions.

The *sekituleghe* or *sekiturege* is a ground bow named by Djenda in 1968[18]. The instrument is still in use in Uganda and traditionally is played by girls and boys as part of a game. They used to sing and dance to the music of the instrument (Sarah Kyasooka interview 13 September 2018). With the help of my friends, Julie and Sarah, I found the sekituleghe in the rural area closer to Kampala. I talked with a few young girls and boys of the Real Angels Christian High School about their dreams and skills. After this, Mukisa Sande, a future mechanical engineer, built

[18] Djenda compares the Sekituleghe with other instruments such as the Musokolome and the Korongoe.

Figure 4. Sekituleghe. Photo by Author.

and played the *sekituleghe*, with the help of a man from the north of the country, who used to play the instrument with his father (see Figure 4).

The picture of the *sekituleghe* in Figure 4 is similar to the drawing in Figure 5 made by Guenter Tessmann. The drawing is attached to a letter sent to Erich von Hornbostel in 1914. The drawing itself was made in 1907 in Spanish-Guinea during an expedition (B. Bleibinger pers. comm. 21 May. 2019). Tessman did not include this drawing in his publication, *Die Pangwe*, published in 1913, but in this

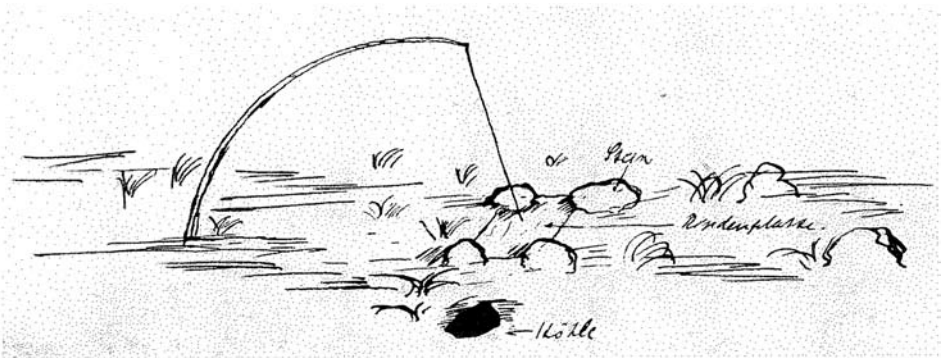

Figure 5. Ground bow register by Tessmann (Ziegler 2006: 283)

work, the author provides a valuable index of the traps that the Fang people used. His observation strengthens the implied relationship between the traps and the ground bows. The structure of the traps depends on the animal that the hunter wants to catch; the "francolin trap" is the most similar to the ground bow in the picture.

This trap uses an elastic branch inserted in the ground, working as a traction stick. It has a rope that is around the hole in the earth. This rope is attached to the branch and the tensioner, a little stick supported by two raffia sticks inserted into the walls of the hole. When the francolin swallows the bait, the rope catches it (Tessman 2007: 157). This type of trap is present in many rural communities of the Colombian Caribbean region. The hunters and the children use this trap to hunt rabbits, armadillos and other animals (Cassiani 2019).

The *carángano*, *dumbu-kalinga* and *sekituleghe* are similar instruments but they also have differences. The resonating body of the *sekituleghe* and the ground *carángano* is a hole in the earth, for *dumbu-kalinga*, the performer introduces a metallic pot inside the hole, producing a more brilliant sound. However, a sheet of metal covers the resonating body of the three instruments. The performer of the *dumbu-kalinga* likes to strike the string with a little stick. For the *sekituleghe*, the performers prefer to pluck the string with the index finger. Finally, to play the *carángano*, many performers use all the fingers of the hand to pluck the string and others prefer to use a piece of wood or plastic.

In southern USA, Central America and the Caribbean region, there exists a type of monochord belonging to the family of the African ground bows. This instrument shares the same organological structure of support, resonating body and string. Evans describes it as a "one-stringed bass, sometimes called a 'washtub bass' or 'gutbucket', based on the materials of its construction. It is generally played in ensembles such as jug and skiffle bands and provides support for lead instruments such as banjos, guitars, kazoos, and harmonicas" (1970: 229).

Other similar instruments are the tina (tube) in Mexico, the Caribbean *quijongo* in Nicaragua, and the *tináfono* in the Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina in Colombia. The function of these instruments is to accompany singing. The *tina* was used approximately 30 years ago in popular dances, while today it is played by traveling musicians, known as the One Man Band, who play "mainstream songs, basically *cumbias*[19], which were accompanied by the notes

[19] A traditional musical style of African origin present throughout the South American continent.

corresponding to the tonic, third and fifth"(Camacho 2011: 150). The Caribbean *quijongo*[20] also performed a minor function in musical genres such as calypso, salsa and jazz, as mentioned by musician, Alfonso Goulborne (Alvarado and Vega 2012). The tináfono or *gat-bucket* is part of the typical island ensemble in the Colombian Caribbean.[21] It is believed that most of the instruments of this structure arrived through Panama and their musical genres through the migrants of the Antilles and Jamaica (Banrepcultural 2016). Similarly, Evans cited that "its (washtub bass) origin in the African 'earth bow' has been pointed out and generally accepted (…) In America, an inverted washtub is simply substituted by the membrane and hole" (1970: 229).

Other instruments of this kind found in the Caribbean are the *tingo-talango*[22] or *tumbadora*, played in Cuba and the *gayumba*[23] in Dominican Republic. Its construction is much closer to the original ground bow, as in using the hole in the ground as a resonating body, and the flexible support. The best description of these instruments is the *guaracha* song named *Tingo talango*, composed by Julio Cueva.[24] The name of this instrument is onomatopoeic (Cuevas n.d.), probably related to the sound of the instrument; the people of Guantanamo used this instrument to play the nengón, a musical genre originally from the island and considered the precursor of *changüí* and *son* (Varona 2015). In the same way, Novas (2014) explains that the gayumba was common in religious evenings in the south of the Dominican Republic, but the ideology imposed by General Trujillo's regiment and the arrival of USA Marines, created prejudices against the instrument, relating it to bad luck. The instrument became extinct. The *gayumba* can be defined as a

[20] For more information see Vos Cultura - Quijongo Caribeño by Andrea Alvarado, Randall Vega and Canal 15 (2012): https://youtu.be/FzLiCEk2Dc0

[21] The following video shows the traditional island format: Jimmy Archbold – "Grey Eyes", produced by the independent collective, *elpoliedrotv* (2012): https://youtu.be/9GU8K54fArs

[22] *Tingo talango* played by Miranda family (n.d): https://youtu.be/E_ZyqnIhgYk

[23] Click on http://conpuntoycoma.blogspot.com/2007/06/la-gayumba-el-arco-musical-africano.html for a picture of the *Gayumba* by Juan Cruz (2007).

[24] According to Varona (2015), the chorus of this song, *dale que dale al sumbantorio*, makes a reference to the back of the woman. In the old days, *sumbantorio* related to the size of the woman and the popular expression, *dale que dale*, is related to "going ahead or give it to her." It may be that this expression refers implicitly to a sexual context, probably by the action to pluck the string with the palm of the hand, or to the squatting position in which this type of instrument was played. *Tingo Talango* by Machito & His Afro Cubans: https://youtu.be/Ay847CWjeq0

percussion instrument with a string, brought by the Pygmy slaves who arrived from Congo and Benin during the time of colonisation (Méndez 2010)[25].

All the instruments identified above, follow a similar construction of a support, a resonating body and one string. However, depending on the conditions of the context and the taste of the instrumentalist, the materials of construction may change. In other words, the impermanence of the organological features is the most important tool (that organology gives) to learn about the musical past of an instrument (Pérez de Arce and Gili 2013).

REPERTOIRE

This section describes three aspects of the *carángano*: the presence of several versions of one musical piece, the influence of the musical genres of the region in the repertoire of this instrument and, the similarities between a son of the *carángano* and a piece of the *dzikamunhenga*.

For transcriptions, we developed a notation[26] that aimed to respect the musical function that performers attribute to the *carángano* as a percussive instrument, specifically as they call it, a "little drum" (Trujillo et al. 2014). Figure 6 below shows many of the symbols of the different techniques utilised on the instrument that demonstrate its percussive qualities.

Symbol	Technique
X	Stopped string
x O	Palm of the hand
↑	Up Branch
↓	Down Branch

Figure 6. Symbols for *carángano* techniques.

Each son has a main rhythmic pattern (theme) that alternates throughout the performance with a variation or variations. The theme is usually of two bars as well as the variation, but in many cases, the variation can be extended. At the

[25] Christopher Columbus landed in 1492 on the island *La Española* (Spanish) or *Hispaniola* (French). In 1503, the Spanish colony began to import African slaves to the American continent. In 1711 Louis XIV formally established the city of *Cap-Français*, dividing the island between the Spanish and the French. However, in 1804 Haiti obtained its freedom, being one of the oldest free republics of the continent. In 1844 the Dominican Republic obtained independence from Spain.

[26] The notation started to develop during the first stage of the research and includes more techniques of the *carángano*.

beginning of each son, the performers usually play the open string establishing the tempo, then, they repeat the theme three or four times while searching for the correct pitch, normally a perfect fifth. After these initial steps, they play the normal structure of theme and variations.

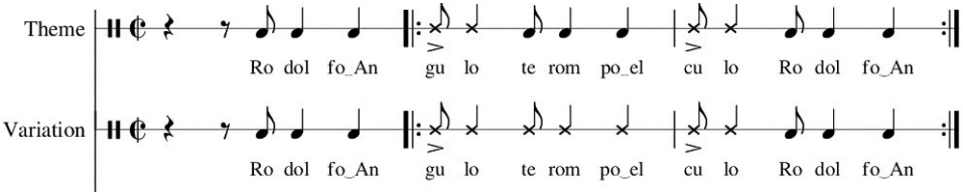

Figure 7. Music transcription of *Te rompo el culo* by Martha Valero. Transcription by Julio Cassiani.

The son entitled *Te rompo el culo*[27] is present in most places we visited. Martha Valero in San Antonio de Palmito played the clearest version of the piece. The phrase "*Rodolfo Angulo*[28], *te rompo el culo*" (Rodolfo Angulo, I break your ass), establishes the rhythmic pattern of this version of the piece (see Figure 7). In the theme, the performer uses the stopped string technique to provide the accents of the phrase, at the first beat of the second and third bars. Meanwhile, in the variation, this technique is applied to maintain the same pitch.

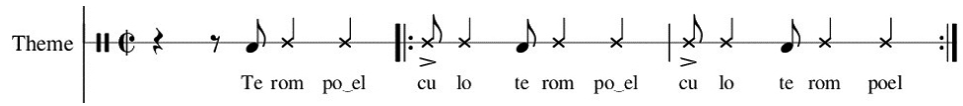

Figure 8. Music transcription of *Te rompo el culo* by Petrona Monterrosa. Transcription by Author.

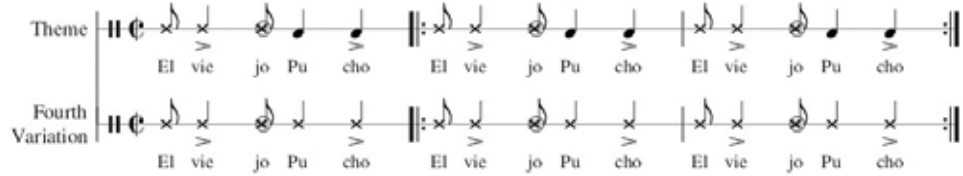

Figure 9. Music transcription of El Viejo Pucho by Martha Valero. Transcription by Julio Cassiani and Author.

[27] Te rompo el culo by Martha Valero: https://vimeo.com/263025148

[28] A masculine name common in the region.

Petrona Moterrosa also plays this *son* (see Figure 8). In this version, she repeats the phrase "*Te rompo el culo*"[29] as a unique theme without variation. The first note of the phrase is an open string and the others are stopped notes. Petrona stopped the string note by note, creating a staccato sensation that imbues the piece with a dancing mood. Arminda recalls the nights when she danced the *carángano* music with her friends.

The piece, *El viejo Pucho*[30] (The Old Pucho) has the same rhythmic patterns of the piece, *Te rompo el culo*, but the accentuation and the techniques provide this son its unique musicality (see Figure 9). In Spanish, the phrase *El Viejo Pucho* has a natural accentuation in the syllables "Vie" and "Pu", but the accentuation of the musical phrase is on the syllable "Vie" at the crotchet on the first beat and the syllable "cho" at the crotchet on the fourth beat. The performer uses the palm of the left hand to obtain a high pitch at the eighth note of the second beat, exalting the syllable "jo." In the fourth variation (22 sec), the interpreter obtains a different colour, using the stopped string and the palm of the hand.

The *carángano* has its own and particular repertoire. The traditional musical groups or other solo instruments of the region do not play the musical pieces of the *carángano*. Solo string instruments like the *carángano* are not common in the region. However, the influence of the traditional musical genres of the Colombian Caribbean region, such as the *Tambora*[31] and *Puya* are heard in many musical pieces of this instrument[32]. These two musical genres use the *tambura*,[33] a two-headed drum, which shares the same rhythmic pattern of the *carángano* musical pieces, *Te rompo el culo* and *El viejo Pucho*.

[29] *Te rompo el culo* by Petrona Monterrosa: https://vimeo.com/263006322

[30] El viejo Pucho by Martha Valero: https://vimeo.com/263023497

[31] The Tambora belongs to the musical category of "Bailes cantados" (Sung Dances). Traditionally it is played in the area of the Depresión Momposina, a river basin in the Colombian Caribbean region. The instruments used are the alegre drum, tambora drum, maracas and gallitos (small wooden boards that are clapped). The group also has a solo singer and a small chorus (Valencia 2004).

[32] The Puya, son corrido or merengue, is fast and played by different instrumental combinations of the Colombian Caribbean region. The puya may also be a section in a musical piece of other traditional genres. The puya, played by the instrumental combination of the Gaita, is the most similar to the carángano music. The instruments used are the maracas, the llamador drum, alegre drum, tambora drum and gaitas (traditional aerophone). The group may have a pair of two long gaitas or one short gaita. This kind of puya is performed in the departments of Bolivar, Sucre and Cordoba (Valencia 2004).

[33] In Colombia, the word Tambora is used to name an instrument, a musical genre, and an instrumental combination.

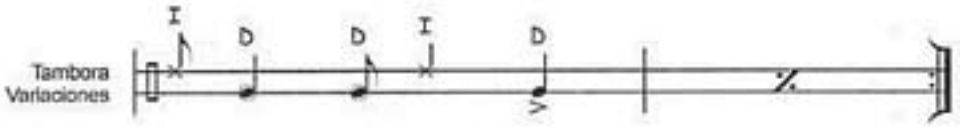

Figure 10. Music transcription of the *tambora* drum variation at the *Tambora* genre (Valencia 2004: 30).

The rhythmic pattern (see Figure 10) is played in a section of the Tambora songs named *Goza'o*,[34] a colloquial form of the word *Gozado* that means, "enjoyed." During this section, the musicians and dancers "enjoy more" the music, the tempo is faster and the rhythmic figures change. The accentuation of the rhythmic pattern is at the crotchet on the fourth beat and is played on one of the drumheads.

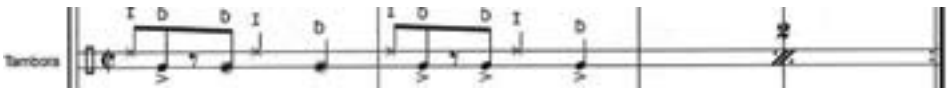

Figure 11. Music transcription of the tambora drum at the Puya genre (Valencia 2004: 40).

In the *Puya*[35] of the *Gaita* group (see Figure 11), the second note of the bar is different from the rhythmic pattern of the *carángano* pieces. The crotchet is replaced by a quaver and a rest, but this change does not affect the structure of the phrase. The accentuation of the rhythmic pattern is different in the two bars. In the first one, the emphasis is on the quaver in the second half of the first beat; meanwhile, in the second bar, the accentuation is present on the same quaver, but also in the quaver of the second beat and the crotchet of the fourth beat. One of the drumheads of the *tambora* is used for all the accentuated notes.

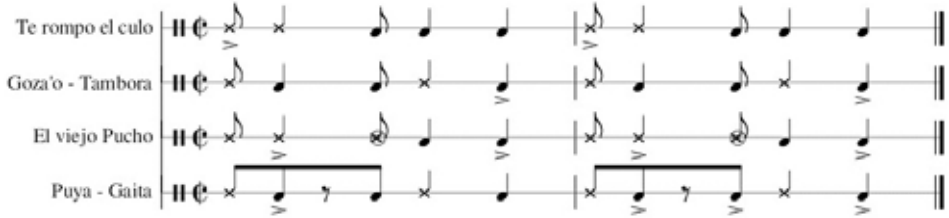

Figure 12. Rhythm patterns comparison. Transcription by Author.

[34] To listen to the Goza'o follow the next link at minute 1:38. *Me robaste el sueño, Tambora*. Performed by Martina Camargo (n.d): https://youtu.be/g-PO9S0s9rs?t=98

[35] *La Gustadera*, *Puya* of *gaita corta*. Author: Arley Soto. Performed by Canteo y Bozá (n.d): https://youtu.be/63So7cGWeAA

Figure 12 shows a comparison between the four rhythmic patterns described above. As mentioned, all of them have the same rhythmic structure, but also have an independent musicality, based on the accents and other effects. Listening to the first two lines, it is possible to hear the musical difference between the accentuations at the first and fourth beat; additionally, the tempo and the instrumental format of each phrase helps to create two different musical experiences. Even if the listener compares the lines of the *carángano* pieces, the differences can be heard between them because of the accentuation. When comparing the recordings of *El viejo Pucho* and the *goza´o* the similarities are more evident, due in part to the shared accent at the fourth beat. The parallel between *El viejo Pucho* and the *puya* is a particular case. Listening to the *tambora* drum,[36] in a slower version of the puya, and the fourth variation of *El viejo Pucho*, the relation of these two lines is evident because they share almost the same accentuation. After many repetitions of the rhythmic pattern in both pieces, the auditory perception ignores the first quaver of the bar, creating a "heard image"[37] (see Figure 13). About this phenomenon Kubik (2016) explains, "The image as it is heard and the image as it is played are often different from each other in African instrumental music" (33).

Figure 13. Rhythm patterns heard image. Transcription by Author.

The traditional musicians consider the accent of the upbeat a strong musical expression of the Colombian "Africanity" that provides the *sabor* (taste) and joy. The *carángano* performers mention the importance of the good execution of the musical phrases; in many cases, they move their shoulders softly and rhythmically to explain the sensation that the music has to produce. Moreover, they are strict about the timbre of the instrument. They like the tense string that produces a clear sound and a "good taste." This framework reminds one that "music as sound always belongs to a larger unit of expressive culture and its correlated forms of expression" (Pinto 2008: 176). Pinto works around an interesting concept of a "time-line" that he defined as "the rhythmical formula that orientates the other musicians involved" (*ibid*.: 171). This time-line pattern reveals the similarities preserved until today in different places and types of music.

The matches between the rhythmic patterns of the *carángano* and these two traditional genres of the regions show a local time-line that guides the "ears" of the

[36] To listen to the *puya* follow the next link at minute 5:58. C*artilla de Músicas Tradicionales: Pitos y Tambores, Bogotá, 2004: Producción discográfica*. https://youtu.be/1QD3PQBw33M?t=357

[37] This is a concept defined by Kubik in his studies of inherent rhythms (1969, 2016).

musicians of the Colombian Caribbean region, including the carángano performers. The next stage for future studies is to follow this rhythmic time-line across the oceans. In the next few paragraphs, I will propose a way forward in this direction.

The piece C*ulo con culo San Andrés*[38], played by Martha Valero from San Antonio de Palmito, has many rhythmic similarities with the African piece, *Kuramba Murume Ane Mombe*[39], played by Sekuro Muradzikwa on *dzikamunhenga* in the musical production, Chipendani Music from Zimbabwe, produced by Kyker (2007).

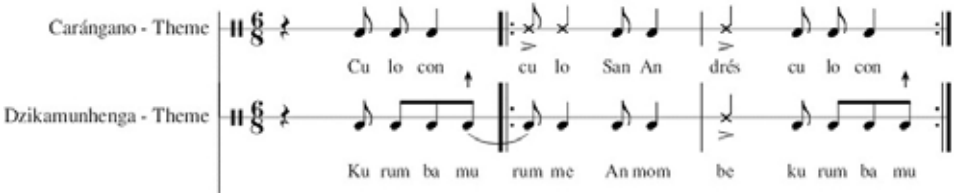

Figure 14. Music Transcription of C*arángano* and *Dzikamunhenga*. Transcription by Author.

In both cases, that is, the *carángano* and the *dzikamunhenga*, the rhythm of the pieces corresponds with the text of the song. However, in the African case, the voice accompanies the sound of the earth bow. In this sense, Pinto mentions that "memorizing musical patterns with syllables or short phrases is an orally-based procedure for transmitting musical culture in Africa, which has been kept in Brazil" (2008: 176). In other Latin American countries such as Colombia, this procedure is retained. As the figure above shows, there is a similarity between the main motive of the *carángano* piece and the theme of *Kuramba Murume Ane Mombe*, with one difference in the second half of the third beat in the first and third bars. The dzikamunhenga use in this beat the up-branch technique, creating a tied effect with the first quaver of the next bar. In many repetitions the performer uses the down-branch technique. In the second bar, the two pieces share the ternary version of the rhythmic pattern of *Te rompo el culo* and *El viejo Pucho*, which is also present in other ternary musical genres of the region such as the C*handé*.

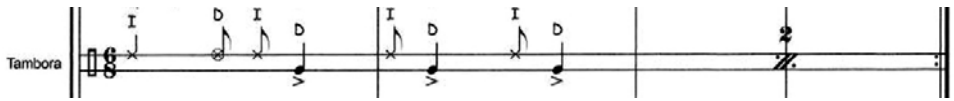

Figure 15. Music transcription of the *tambora* drum at the C*handé* genre (Valencia 2004: 40).

[38] *Culo con culo San Andrés*: https://vimeo.com/263013563

[39] Chipendani Music from Zimbabwe. Track 20 https://www.cdbaby.com/cd/muradzikwa

Consequently, the presence of this rhythmic pattern, the prevalence of the accents at the up beats creating even, inherent rhythms, draws a line among the *carángano* music, other Colombian genres and an instrument like the *tambora*, the *dzikamunhenga* and other African instruments and music. In this regard, Pinto speaks about the rhythms that cross everywhere, responding to time-lines that teach, guide, and accompany the successors of African culture (2008). For the Colombian musicians, these musical footprints are the material to create new constructions that preserve the link with the other side of the ocean.

The same reality

Music heals because it makes people forget the pain.
Mtumbateka Mamatsharaga

The arrival of electricity, the radio and television in the towns of the Colombian Caribbean Region, brought new alternatives to live entertainment and communication to these communities. These facilities opened the door to new music and cultures; and exposed the lack of knowledge about the cultural roots and identity of these communities. One outcome of this development is ignorance about the carángano. It is probable that this instrument arrived in America with African ancestors. Maybe they used to play this ground bow to communicate and express sentiments at a time when death and silence were the rule. In other words, instruments like the *carángano* survived the time of slavery, when humanity was at one of its lowest ebbs.

This research found that the *carángano* preserves the organological structure of the African ground bows. The instrument also conserves its social function as entertainment. On the other hand, in Colombia this tradition is led and transmitted by women, presenting itself as a musical exception in a country with a patriarchal tradition.

Arminda Pérez remembers her childhood playing and dancing the carángano music with her friends. She said, "As I've always liked it (the *carángano*) since I was a child, I can't forget it anymore. I always played it, and I feel joyful" (Interview 7 September 2014). To an outside observer, the *carángano* could be a simple instrument, but for the performers it represents a valuable part of their life, connected by friendship and social integration. Dargie describes this phenomenon as follows: "Bows are deceptively simple instruments, and easily undervalued by outside observers, but nevertheless they have played important roles among the peoples who use them" (2016). The relationship between the African and American culture is deep and close:

> Since the "material" that African slaves could take with them across the Atlantic on their forced way to the Americas, was just their own body. When they succeeded in surviving the transatlantic passage, the only belongings Africans carried with them were ideas, religions, concepts, among which also their musicality (Pinto 2008: 165).

Consequently, it is necessary to recognise that "the tangible can only be interpreted through the intangible" (Pérez 1996: 34). In order to legitimise the performers and culture-bearers, it is important to understand their values and aspirations, without which the instrument is torn from its context and cannot be given its proper meaning (Pérez 1996, Bithell and Hill 2015). More than placing the *carángano* and the ground bows in an exhibition or in a paper, it is vital to reactivate the practice of these instruments into the actual musical dynamics, taking care of their musical and social character.

It is the duty of scholarship and state to support the performers and local community to achieve a common goal, that is, the restructuring of the generational bridge among the elderly and young people to reactivate and re-contextualise the ground bows and other forgotten traditions. In other words, it is necessary that these institutions join "to ensure the viability of living heritage and to achieve inclusive development for the benefit of present and future generations" (UNESCO 2018: 3).

In the different places and moments where I had the fortune to listen to the *carángano,* the *Dumbu-Kalinga*, and the *Sekituleghe*, I found that the sound of these instruments brings back the memories of childhood. For a moment, the performers travel in time, they remember their family and friends, make jokes and tell stories. They move with the music and in many cases they sing and dance. Curiously, the youngsters always want to learn.

The ground bows allow the people of America and Africa to recognise the importance and power of the common cultural roots that are present, day-by-day in life and in the shaping of identity[40]. From that initial question in the classroom by Professor Julio C. Cassiani, I embarked on an adventure to find the answer. Throughout my travels, I learned about the value that musical instruments may have in connecting human beings. The *carángano* carries the story of traditional lifestyles, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and social, political and historical change. And through its performance, it is revealed that, for a moment, its performers and audience can enjoy and feel free.

[40] This concept is present and developed in the Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development named, "Our creative diversity" (1996).

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