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**AN EXAMINATION OF THE CHANGÜÍ GENRE
OF GUANTÁNAMO, CUBA**

by

BENJAMIN L. LAPIDUS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2002

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

AN EXAMINATION OF THE CHANGÜÍ GENRE OF GUANTÁNAMO, CUBA

by

Benjamin L. Lapidus

Adviser: Professor Stephen Blum

This dissertation is concerned with a regionally specific genre of Cuban music, changüí, and with how its practitioners transmit historical consciousness through song and dance. Changüí is a unique and dynamic music that thrives in Guantánamo, the easternmost province of Cuba. For approximately a century before the revolution of 1959, a changüí was a rural party with eating, drinking, dancing, and musical duels. Many changüiseros distinguished themselves as vocal improvisers and instrumentalists; songs by and about these musicians form a large part of the current changüí repertoire and include references to past musical gatherings, local history, instrumentation, and changüí itself. In this way, changüí is a continuously self-referencing genre.

Closer to Haiti than to Havana, Guantánamo has been the conduit and crucible for some of the most important and seminal aspects of Cuban musical culture. The Guantánamo province and the larger surrounding *Oriente* region (eastern Cuba) have

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been the area of Cuba where white French creole and Afro-Haitian culture flourished since the time of the Haitian Revolution in 1791. For Cuba, the immediate musical effects of this Haitian presence begin with the contradanza craze of the nineteenth century and continue to be incorporated into the son, Cuba's national genre. A number of distinctive and little-researched genres still flourish in the region; these include changüí, tumba francesa, montompolo, tajona and many others.

Changüí is important and interesting for a number of reasons. First, it has many unique musical features best described as a dense melodic and rhythmic complexity that emphasizes upbeats and syncopation; the beautiful accompanying dance embodies the music's sophistication. To date, both the music and the dance have been understudied or studied inadequately. Second, a close examination of changüí adds new perspectives to the study of mainstream Cuban music by focusing on how non-Cuban contributions have enhanced the development of Cuban music, particularly the Haitian role in the development of the son. Third, a study of changüí stresses the importance of regional variety, highlighting the larger, complex and problematic relationship of regional musical culture to national musical culture. Finally, an investigation of changüí reveals some of the weaknesses of the current Cuban genre classification, because it does not neatly fit into established categories thus questioning other genre relationships in Cuba.

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Acknowledgements

On my first trip to Cuba I began friendships with a number of individuals who welcomed my questions, and who saw to it that I learned as much as I could in the short time available.

Ramón "Mongo" Gómez Blanco is a first-class trumpeter, composer, and *investigador* (researcher), well versed in changüí and son. Mongo has continually shared information from his own field experiences, and has given me numerous articles that he has written, and has. Without his friendship, knowledge, patience, and interest in my success, this project would not have succeeded. On each of my trips, Mongo and I co-interviewed a number of musicians. He often tracked down musicians to confirm their availability and he was always on the lookout for more material.

When I met José Cuenca Sosa, he was working at the Centro Comunitario de Cultura. José, whose background is in choral music and musicology, is an expert on changüí. On my second trip, José came with me on many interviews; sometimes we conducted between two and three interviews per day. Our tag-team interview process was extremely effective by allowing for a casual and informative conversation with the musicians we interviewed. If I had difficulty articulating a question, José would jump in and vice versa. Our work in December 1998 was rewarding, but exhausting, and often frustrating. We spent a good deal of time traveling by foot or horse-driven coach to remote neighborhoods where the sounds of trucks and motorcycles invaded our interviews with soft-spoken elders. José welcomed Teresita and I into his home for weeks at a time, and picked us up at the airport, even when this could have caused him serious problems. José is currently the director of the Casa Inciarte, a local branch of

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CIDMUC (Center for the Investigation and Development of Cuban Music). In this capacity he facilitated my access to Rafael Inciarte's fieldnotes, as well as many photos of changüí musicians. José continues to run the yearly changüí songwriting competitions. This dissertation is as much the product of José's work as of mine.

My tres teacher, Guillermo "Bule" Mustelier, taught me how to play the tres like a changüisero, and our relationship extended beyond formal lessons to informal gatherings in his house, with food and other musicians. The son of Haitian migrants, Bule is quick with a smile and always willing to play an example on his tres.

In December of 1998 I had the distinct pleasure of meeting Carlos Borromeo Planche a.k.a. "Cambrón," the grandson of Haitian immigrants. At that time, he was 89 and in excellent physical condition. José and I would meet Cambrón in the park every morning and he would accompany us to interviews with older musicians, helping to prod them with his elephantine memory and melodious voice. Cambrón went through Inciarte's notes with José and myself, singing notated examples, discussing long forgotten musicians and genres, and sharing his experiences with us in multiple interviews. On a number of occasions during this trip, Cambrón engaged in musical duels demonstrating his skills as an excellent singer, dancer, and percussionist. During our walks through the city everyone stopped to greet him and he would introduce me as family. At night he was a *cumbanchero* (party reveler), drinking large quantities of rum while still performing music and hanging out with the stamina of a man one-third his age. The news of his passing, in May of 1999, was profoundly sad; Cambrón occupies much of my memory of Guantánamo.

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María Josefa Sánchez Heredia works at Guantánamo's provincial library, Biblioteca Provincial José Policarpo Pineda. She helped me locate articles and photos about changüí, local musical culture, and local history. In addition, she and her technician, Luis Adrian Barbier, helped me with the library's computer facilities. Together with Mongo, she has written two excellent articles about local musical culture, which I found to be invaluable.

This study of changüí would have been impossible without the help of the people of Guantánamo. Numerous musicians, dancers, chroniclers, and changüí aficionados have shared their experiences, materials, and knowledge with me over the past five years. Their trust, patience, and interest in this project were unending. These include José Díaz Planes, Santiago Moreaux Jardines, Nino Olivares Pérez, Eduardo "Pipi" Goulet Letapié, Julian Valier, Domingo Del Rio, Jésus Alvarez, the members of Bongó Caliente, Rácifo Durán Durruthy, Marcelino Ruiz, Nino Mendoza, Justo Kindelan, Evelia "Bella" Noblet Colás, Juan Gualberto "Bebé" Vichí Guibert, Yu, Puche, Celso and Luis Gómez, Antonio Cisneros "Ñico Ya" Arnaud, Julio Valier, Ariel Daudinot Brooks, Emeterio Epifanio Faure Michel, Diocles Antonio "Kiko" Brooks Villalón, Andrés "Taveras" Fistó Cobas, Manolín, Celso, Miguel Alá Barnés. Justo Kindelán, Ernesto Llelywn, Nino Mendoza, José Antonio Moreaux Jardines, Lázaro Durán, and Pedro Castillo Lescaille "Pachín," among others.

Director of Cultural Affairs, Carmen Lamorú La O, always welcomed me into her offices and was extremely helpful when I had to interact with the state's immigration bureaucracy. Her colleague, Ernesto Chacón Dominguez, saw to it that my research went

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along without problems and he helped resolve my transportation problems on multiple occasions.

In 1997, I met Arturo López Levy in Havana. In 1998, he and his two brothers welcomed me into their house and took me to and from the airport. They also took me to meet an unconfirmed relative.

A grant from the CUNY Caribbean Exchange Program helped defray the costs of my 1998 research trip. Similarly, the CUNY Graduate Center Dissertation Year Award gave me the support and impetus needed to complete my dissertation in a timely manner.

My supervisor, Dr. Stephen Blum, exemplifies the highest level of scholarship in the field of music; his knowledge seems to be limitless. A tireless student and a teacher who enjoys teaching, Dr. Blum provided guidance, constructive criticism, optimism, and encouragement throughout every stage of this process and throughout my coursework.

Dr. Peter Manuel is one of the foremost scholars of Caribbean music. His analytical and theoretical insights were extremely helpful to me in trying to articulate the differences between son and changüí and the uniqueness of the changüí tres style. His expertise in Cuban music made him invaluable to my dissertation and my graduate studies.

After I took one course with Dr. Alfonso Quiroz, an expert on colonial Latin America, he invited me to participate in a conference on the Spanish-American War and to help with a concurrent exhibition at the New York Public Library. This enthusiasm and interest in my work made me feel that I was doing something worthwhile. Dr. Quiroz shared his historical insight and encouragement throughout the writing process.

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Dr. Dominique Cyrille, Dr. Juan Flores, and Dr. Laird Bergad provided me with useful suggestions and insights prior to, and during, the defense.

My grandparents offered support throughout graduate school, for which I am thankful. My parents were a constant source of emotional support and encouragement. They provided inspiration at crucial points in my graduate school experience. My sister, possessing the excellent writing skills that I lack, read through many of my writings at various stages of graduate school and offered constructive suggestions that I am grateful for.

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Introduction: Issues and Claims Surrounding the *Son*'s Developmental and Geographical Trajectory; Historical Overview of Guantánamo and Changüí

This dissertation is concerned with a regionally specific genre of Cuban music, changüí, and with how its practitioners transmit historical consciousness through song and dance. Changüí is a unique and dynamic music that thrives in Guantánamo, the easternmost province of Cuba. For approximately a century before the revolution of 1959, a changüí was a rural party with eating, drinking, dancing, and musical duels. Many changüiseros distinguished themselves as vocal improvisers and instrumentalists; songs by and about these musicians form a large part of the current changüí repertoire and include references to past musical gatherings, local history, instrumentation, and changüí itself. In this way, changüí is a continuously self-referencing genre.

Closer to Haiti than to Havana, Guantánamo has been the conduit and crucible for some of the most important and seminal aspects of Cuban musical culture. The Guantánamo province and the larger surrounding *Oriente* region (eastern Cuba) has been the area of Cuba where white French Creole and Afro-Haitian culture flourished since the time of the Haitian Revolution in 1791. For Cuba, the immediate musical effects of this Haitian presence begin with the contradanza craze of the nineteenth century and continue to be incorporated into the son, Cuba's national genre. A number of distinctive and little-researched genres still flourish in the region; these include changüí, tumba francesa, montompolo, tajona, and many others.

Changüí is important and interesting for a number of reasons. First, changüí has many unique musical features best described as a dense melodic and rhythmic complexity that emphasizes upbeats and syncopation; the beautiful accompanying dance embodies

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the music's sophistication. To date, both the music and the dance have been understudied or studied inadequately. Second, a close examination of changüí adds new perspectives to the study of mainstream Cuban music by focusing on how non-Cuban contributions have enhanced the development of Cuban music, particularly the Haitian role in the development of the son. Third, a study of changüí stresses the importance of regional variety, highlighting the larger, complex and problematic relationship of regional musical culture to national musical culture. Finally, an investigation of changüí reveals some of the weaknesses of the current Cuban genre classification, because it does not neatly fit into established categories, thus calling into question the nature of other genre relationships in Cuba.

Despite this rich historical and musical legacy, many Cubans described Guantánamo to me as the poorest province in Cuba. Guantanameros often remind me that several local sugar plantations together don't produce as much sugar as one plantation would produce in most provinces. According to current regional sugar production statistics posted by the Cuban government on its website, Guantánamo ranks second to last, with only six *centrales* (mills), none of which is capable of more than 300,00 *arrobas* (an arroba is a weight measurement equivalent to 25 pounds).[1] Time spent in Santiago de Cuba and Havana seems to support general claims about the region's economic misfortunes. In Guantánamo, living standards are lower in many ways: there are fewer dollar-only stores where goods can be purchased in U.S. currency, salaries are generally lower than in the capital and other provinces, and housing conditions seem worse than in Havana and Santiago. According to José L. Luzón's study of Cuban

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[1] http://www.cubagob.cu/mapa.htm

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housing, there are statistically more propped-up houses, houses with leaks, and *bohíos* (shacks) in Guantánamo than in most other provinces; as a result Luzón writes, "therefore we see not only an urban-rural contrast but also a western-eastern one."[2]

Today, Cuba's tourism industry is arguably the island's largest generator of capital aside from remissions. Despite visible efforts to attract tourists to the province, Guantánamo is largely uninviting and ill equipped for those with hard currency seeking sun, sand, and major tourist attractions such as museums and glitzy stage shows. Guantánamo is nowhere to be found in the list of *polos turísticos* (tourism centers) that the Cuban government's Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) is operating or developing.[3]

There are a few notable exceptions. For a modest fee (by U.S. standards) the Hotel Guantánamo and MINTUR offer tourist excursions to Yateras where participants attend 'authentic' changüí parties at the Casa del Changüí, home to Eduardo Goulet Letapié a.k.a. "Pipi" and his group Estrellas Campesinas. The hotel provides the food on site such as chicken, rice, and beans, and guests are transported by bus. The musicians do not have professional status conferred upon them by the state and therefore can't earn money from their performance except in the form of tips or some rum. Similar excursions are available to Baracoa where one can experience a 'traditional' meal and hear the folkloric group Kiribá y Nengón perform variants of changüí.

The most active and prominent changüí musicians in Guantánamo have been of Haitian descent, as indicated by the same family names appearing in local song and history for several generations. Scholars based in the capital have taken little interest in

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[2] José L. Luzón, "Housing in Socialist Cuba: An Analysis Using Cuban Censuses of Population and Housing," *Cuban Studies* 18 (1988): 80.
[3] http://www.cubagob.cu/mapa.htm

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the claims of local musicians and musicologists concerning changüí's importance in Cuban music history. As a result, the genre has become emblematic of a larger battle over the telling of history, which is set against the backdrop of a longstanding rivalry between the east and the west.

For the first part of the twentieth-century, Haitian laborers were viewed as a necessary part of the sugar industry, but they were often discriminated against and brutalized.[4] Past prejudices may have contributed to minimizing the Haitian influence in both local musical culture and national musical culture.

In the last ten years, the local government has sponsored genre-specific musical competitions for composers, instrumentalists, and dancers. The competitions have had an impact on musical practice, and they provide excellent opportunities for witnessing debates about musical change, which include arguments about gender roles and differences of opinion formed along generational lines. Through interviews with musicians, analyses of musical transcriptions, song texts, and contest results, the dissertation explores the fascinating history of changüí, adding an important and often overlooked chapter to the history of Cuban music and the Cuban nation.

Musical Life in Guantánamo

As poor as Guantánamo is in material terms, the region is rich in history, culture and music. There are many musical groups in Guantánamo performing a wide variety of Cuban musics: a few timba bands (modern Cuban dance music or salsa), numerous rap

[4] Barry Carr, "Identity, Class and Nation: Black Immigrant Workers, Cuban Communism and the Sugar Insurgency, 1925-1934," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, no. 1 (1998): 93-94.

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groups, música campesina, trova, nueva trova (new song), rock, Afrocuban religious musics, tumba francesa, Afro-Haitian folklore ensembles, traditional guitar trios, symphonic band, a male chorus, an organ ensemble, numerous configurations of son groups including sextetos, septetos and conjuntos, rumba groups, adult and children's carnival ensembles (congas and comparsas), and numerous changüí ensembles. There is also a cabaret called the Hanoi where a show band plays everything from salsa to santería, as do cabaret bands in Havana and Santiago de Cuba. Numerous bands perform at the Hotel Guantánamo and at the few other places where tourists can be found. At the hotel's disco locals and tourists take in videos and CDs from North American artists such as Destiny's Child, Michael Jackson, Bryan Adams, and just about every other popular artist on the U.S. airwaves today.

Guantanameros of all generations pride themselves on their knowledge of U.S. popular music and associated dances, particularly discovering U.S. artists more quickly than neighbors in other provinces and even in Havana. This knowledge is attributed to the radio and television signals broadcast from the nearby U.S. military base's Armed Forces Network (AFN). The Cuban government has been largely unsuccessful in blocking these signals. Although parabolic antennae are illegal, many locals have made and continue to use them surreptitiously. Even without a sophisticated antenna it is not difficult to get a good glimpse of Al Roker and the Today Show crew's live broadcasts from Rockefeller Center. For a New Yorker, this is always a surreal experience, particularly during the winter months.

Local radio and television (Solvisión) feature performances by changüí groups. Often changüí groups record these appearances and copy them for friends and family.

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Potential promoters both in Cuba and abroad use these recordings to seek performance opportunities for these groups.

Changüiseros are involved in many other facets of local musical life and often participate in other types of musical groups as dancers and instrumentalists. Many musicians who do not play changüí have shared stories with me about their parents and grandparents' involvement with legendary changüí gatherings and musicians.

Walking through the city by day, one is likely to hear the sounds of New York salsa, particularly Marc Anthony and La India, blaring through ancient speakers at the market. At night, in Reparto Caribe, a neighborhood in the northern part of the city, one hears Cuban rappers such as SBS and Amenaza (now known as Orishas). After dinner, this music often gives way to the Brazilian, Colombian, and Venezuelan novelas (soap operas). Cubans are fiercely devoted to their novelas; every television tunes into these programs simultaneously, and one can walk for miles in canyons of melodramatic sound, a truly unique and amazing experience. Often, state television will run U.S.-made movies of varying artistic quality, accompanied by televised commentary from a distinguished member of the national union of writers (UNEAC).

During holy days honoring San Lázaro (Babalu Ayé), Santa Bárbara (Changó), and others, one can walk throughout the city, hearing *bembés* (ritual musical ceremonies usually performed without batá drums). There are numerous active *babalaos* (high priests) and *paleros* (practitioners of Congolese religions) throughout the province as well as practitioners of various Afro-Haitian religious traditions such as Vodou. During carnival and the annual cultural festival, well-known Cuban salsa bands such as Pachito

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Alonso y Su Kini Kini, Cándido Fabré, Orquesta Revé, and others perform in the large plaza or at various locations throughout the city.

Folkloric shows aimed at tourists are often didactic in nature, showing the development of local Cuban music. In 1997, I attended one such show, *Andar con el son* (Walking with the son) by El Septeto Típico de Guantánamo (now Los Universales del Son), with a group of North American students studying local musical practices. The performance was structured chronologically, creating a narrative that began with Afrocuban religious music and continued with variants of changüí. The show continued with changüí and son, concluding with carnival music. Even when folkloric performances are not structured with such an explicitly didactic intent, they can become didactic. Most every ensemble that I have seen performing a staged folkloric show in Guantánamo offered one or more question and answer periods during a given performance. Spectators might ask for an explanation of the differences between changüí and son.

Beyond folkloric stage presentations for tourists, changüí groups perform weekly at the Casa de la Trova, in the streets of Guantánamo every Saturday night, at festivals, and at other venues with stages. In Yateras and other rural regions, changüí is still performed at private parties. In 1998, I was fortunate to attend a private birthday celebration in the San Justo section of the city of Guantánamo where members of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo and other musicians provided non-stop music. The party included a roast pig and other foods, plenty of alcohol, and a good-sized crowd eager to sing and dance. We arrived at three in the afternoon and left well after midnight. This type of event is nothing like the events intended for tourists because it featured musical

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duels by vocalists, copious alcohol consumption, collective participation on the part of the audience in the form of performing, singing and dancing, and the long duration.

Numerous Guantánamo-based changüí groups tour and record throughout the island, performing changüí and its variants; a select few groups tour and/or record internationally. Guantánamo is a large city and when famous bands perform locally it is safe to say that more people will attend a visiting band's performance than a changüí performance. However, changüí has a core of devotees, musicians, dancers, and partygoers who consistently fill changüí events to beyond their venues' capacities.

Clearly Guantanameros are aware of and make use of mass-mediated entertainment from a variety of countries, but the effect on changüí and traditional musics does not seem to be detrimental. In fact, each year it seems that there are more and more changüí groups: groups of musicians in their 20s and 30s, all-female groups, groups of elder musicians dedicated to playing older songs, and a children's group. Clearly, changüí is thriving as evidenced by the number of changüiseros, new groups, and increasingly available recordings. Subsequent chapters indicate the great extent to which changüí is a living, vibrant tradition whose accepted practices and definitions continue to be questioned, negotiated, and redefined. Younger musicians seek new ways to inhabit the tradition while flexing their own musical muscles and telling their own stories. In this way the genre is still relevant and exciting, not to be thought of as a mere folkloric practice; as a recent refrain states best, "changüí tiene su gente" (changüí has its people). For many locals the genre and its associated behavior remain a source of pride and a marker of uniqueness. Changüiseros have not shed their image as people who like to party; alcohol—particularly *aguardiente* (unrefined rum generally bought in the street for

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little money)— is omnipresent at changüí gatherings and performances. During the course of my fieldwork it was customary to pass a glass or bottle early in the morning. Informal playing situations would turn into parties when alcohol or food was introduced. Finding a party with lavish food is becoming increasingly rare in these desperate times for Cuba, but the positive and festive environment has not abated. In fact, changüí provides the same source of recreation and release that it offered to many of its legendary protagonists who through music sought refuge from the backbreaking task of cutting and processing sugar cane.

Not all Guantanameros are changüiseros, but everyone seems to be proud of the history and tradition that the genre stands for and most locals are eager to share their views of the genre. Musicians are especially proud of changüí when discussing what distinguishes them from their counterparts in other provinces. While folkloric musics such as rumba and batá drumming are taught in Cuban music schools, changüí is not taught in the local branch of the national music school system. Perhaps there is no agreed-upon method for formalizing a pedagogical program for changüí.

Changüiseros come from throughout the province to see one another at festivals and public events related to the genre. For many changüiseros, changüí is more than music: it is a philosophical dance through life.

Cuban Genre Complexes

Throughout the literature on Cuban music and culture one finds authors such as Fernando Ortiz, Lydia Cabrera, Alejo Carpentier, Jorge and Isabel Castellanos, Argeliers León, and countless others classifying instruments, languages, and other cultural

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manifestations, notably performance genres. Nothing is more central to the discourse of Cuban music than studies of genres and genre complexes. Cuban scholars such as Olavo Alén Rodríguez, Danilo Orozco, María Teresa Linares, and Cristobal Díaz Ayala have written important genre studies on tumba francesa, son, rumba, pregones, and other Cuban genres. For the aforementioned scholars, genre complex categorization is largely based on organology and ethnic derivation: on determining what is African or Spanish, Congolese or Yoruba. Caribbean specialists adhere to these genre complexes in general reference guides to music such as *Diccionario de la música española y hispano-americana*, *Musiques du monde*, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, and in textbooks such as *Caribbean Currents* and *Music in Latin American Culture*. Nevertheless, there is still significant confusion concerning genres and their classification: when searching for changüí in reference guides readers are always directed to an entry on son. Although these classifications and divisions are useful for pedagogical purposes, they are conceptually imperfect and often contradictory.

In *De lo afrocubano a la salsa: géneros musicales de Cuba* (1992), Olavo Alén Rodríguez divides Cuban genres into five categories: son, rumba, canción cubana (European-derived song), danzón, and punto guajiro (a type of folk music traditionally associated with white Hispanic-Cuban peasants). In his review of Alén's book, Jorge Duany critiques Alén's approach because "stressing separate traditions produces a

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fragmented view of Cuban music, and one is sometimes left wondering if such a thing actually exists . . . the whole is lost in its parts."[5]

Danilo Orozco has opted for four genre complexes: rumba, canción (which includes canción and bolero), son, and danzón. Within each complex Orozco sees the possibility for subcomplexes. Unlike Alén Rodríguez, Orozco emphasizes that:

> It is important to clarify that in reality these complexes and subcomplexes do not possess all of the properties or stable characteristics that correspond to a real system (in this case music). For they require specific properties that are not always present or stable. As a consequence, some are relatively stable and others are more variable; what is important is the function that they carry out within the context of Cuban music (and in its representation).[6]

This dissertation is relevant to the ongoing discourse about Cuban genre classification, because in changüí one encounters musical and behavioral characteristics found in son, rumba, and *música campesina* (the general term for music of white Hispanic-Cuban peasants), thus demonstrating how problematic the current system of genre classification can be. Furthermore the music's social functions can be linked to those of each of these three genre complexes.

The relationship between changüí and son is a major focus of this dissertation, to be addressed throughout. The two genres are similar in some respects: they are both couple dances accompanied by similar instrumentation whose musical apex is the

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[5] Jorge Duany, review of *De lo afrocubano a la salsa: géneros musicales de Cuba,* by Alén Rodríguez, *Latin American Music Review* 16, no.1 (1995): 93.

[6] Danilo Orozco, "Procesos socioculturales y rasgos de identidad en la música cubana" *Latin American Music Review* 13, no. 2 (1992), 158: "Es importante esclarecer que en realidad estos complejos y subcomplejos no mantinenen todas las propiedades o rasgos estables que le corresponderían como sistema real (en este caso sistema musical). Para ello requierirían propiedades específicas que no siempre están presentes o no son estables. En consequencia, unos son estables en grado relativo y otros de estabilidad más variable, lo que tiene importancia en la función que desempeñan dentro del contexto de la música cubana (y en su representatividad)."

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montuno (refrain). Yet the two genres are quite different in other aspects. As traditionally performed in Guantánamo, changüí's distinctive social characteristics include musical duels, endless parties with frequent changes in ensemble personnel via public participation, and song texts that focus on the genre and its musical protagonists as well as local history. Changüí's distinctive musical characteristics include highly syncopated interlocking parts not bound by a timeline instrument, a unique dance-step, and a specific ensemble of instruments, among others.

Haitian migration to Oriente and its impact on local culture appears to be a major factor contributing to Oriente's unique musical culture. Cuban scholars agree with this point, but they have not fully addressed the musical impact of this migration on the development of son. Fernando Ortiz was interested in the direction of diffusion of instruments and looked for similarities throughout the Caribbean. He collaborated with a local musicologist, Rafael Inciarte Brioso, concerning music and musical instruments in Oriente. Ortiz emphasized the Haitian origins of many instruments in the region, as have Alén and Orozco, but rarely in relation to son.

Herein I propose that changüí, rather than constituting a mere variant of the son, comprises its own musical complex with (1) variations and antecedents inside Guantánamo and with (2) variations outside of Guantánamo. Furthermore, changüí is the unique product of the Creole culture in Oriente created by Cubans, Haitians, and other inter-Caribbean migrants. After presenting a brief overview of the issues and claims surrounding the son's developmental and geographical trajectory, I will show how changüí has been placed within a master narrative of the son's development and how local musicians and musicologists interact with this narrative, often expanding upon it.

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Issues and Claims about the Cuban Son

In 1990, James Robbins wrote that the Cuban son is "unrivaled as the embodiment of an indigenous musical mainstream and as a symbol of musical nationalism." [7] It is perhaps for this reason that discussions concerning the son's origins and geographic trajectory are similar to the interpretative debates that religious scholars have over the central texts of their faiths.

Currently, the son's history is repeatedly told as a conflation of politics, migration, and transculturation. In 1909 (well after the second war of independence which ended in 1898) soldiers in the *ejercito permanente* (permanent army) are said to have carried the son from Oriente to western Cuba. When offering the 1909 date for the son's arrival in Havana, most scholars credit and quote musicologist and musician, Odilio Urfé.[8] From the 1920s on, the son was offered as the consummate Cuban Creole genre, because it allegedly embodies the transculturation of Spanish, African, and Taíno musical elements.[9] The western portion of the island is traditionally portrayed as having more neo-African and neo-Spanish music, while the eastern provinces are viewed as being historically more conducive to creolization. In Oriente, small farming and a substantial free Afrocuban population created better conditions for Creole culture. In contrast, the immense plantation society in Western Cuba limited the social contact between African slaves and Europeans. Although in many aspects accurate, this narrative is too linear and simplistic: Cuban musical and social history involves movement in both directions. The

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[7] James Robbins, "The Cuban Son as Form, Genre, and Symbol" *Latin American Music Review* 11, no. 2 (1990): 182.
[8] Helio Orovio, *Diccionario de la música cubana: biográfico y técnico* (La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas), 456.

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major population shift from 1880-1899 was from west to east, and in the next three decades from the outer regions towards the center of the island.[10] It seems unlikely that a small group of soldiers could be solely responsible for the diffusion of son if the general population did not move from east to west.

There are two standard approaches to the son's development, which I will call national and local (local to Guantánamo); both are problematic. The national perspective, articulated by histories of Cuban music printed in Havana, supports Ortiz's notion of the *ajiaco* (stew) that makes up Cuban culture and its music. The national perspective maintains that the son was carried from east to west but does not engage with the steps in this journey of change and development. Such steps include changüí and related variants. This history attributes the son's pre-commercial development to a faceless folk and considers changüí as part of the son complex.[11] In this way son is departicularized and idealized.

Some scholars based in the capital agree or disagree with the proposed date of 1909 for the son's arrival in the west. In a passage that is reminiscent of how the development of blues is explained in the United States, Gómez Cairo writes that each region in Cuba has local variants of son that throughout history came into contact with

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[9] Cuban writers who wish to insist on survival of Amerindian traits often cite the maracas (rattles).
[10] Jesús Guanche, "El poblamiento de Cuba: aspectos etnodemográficos," in *Instrumentos de la música folclórico-popular de Cuba, volumen 1* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1997), 38.
[11] Natalio Galán, *Cuba y sus sones* (Madrid: Pre-Textos, 1983), 311-312. Galán writes that "primitive" son ("transitional" subgenres such as nengón, kiribá, etc.) from Baracoa and Guantánamo was developed and performed anonymously. This view is shared by some, but not all scholars.

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one another through itinerant musicians.[12] He states that the most "canonized," established and nationally-known style of son is the variant from Havana.[13] However, for Gómez Cairo the defining characteristics of son rest on organology, particularly the combination of plucked string instruments and percussion.[14] For his part, Giró places little faith in the presumed role of the ejército permanente in carrying the son west, because as an institution its main function wasn't music making.[15] In his opinion, because many son-type refrains are found throughout Cuba since the second half of the nineteenth century, it is reasonable to assume that son was heard in the capital prior to 1909.[16] For Martha Esquenazi Pérez the son complex has three variants with geographic associations: (1) changüí is from Guantánamo proper and a few places in Santiago and Holguín, (2) sucu-sucu is from the Isla de la Juventud (Isle of Pines) and some western rural zones, and (3) son montuno is played throughout the entire island with "perceivable regional variants in Bayamo, Manzanillo, Majagua, and Pinar del Rio."[17] Thus, when Cuban musicologists do consider changüí and its related variants, nengón and kiribá, it is mostly as predecessors and early variants of contemporary Cuban son, not meriting separate classification.

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[12] Jésus Gómez Cairo, "Acerca de la interacción de géneros en la música popular cubana," in *Panorama de la música popular cubana* (La Habana: Editorial Facultad de Humanidades / Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1995), 135.
[13] Ibid., 132.
[14] Ibid., 132.
[15] Radamés Giró, "Los motives del son: hitos en su sendero caribeño y universal," in *Panorama de la música popular cubana* (La Habana: Editorial Facultad de Humanidades/Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1995), 221.
[16] Ibid., 221.
[17] Martha Esquenazi Pérez, *Del areíto y otros sones* (La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2001), 196.

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Interestingly, Fernando Ortiz offered another date in the son's chronology by linking the diffusion of the bongó with soldiers who returned to Havana after quelling the 1912 Race War in Oriente:

> It seems that the bongó arrived in Havana [and was] brought from the region of Oriente by the Cuban troops that traveled to that province from Havana in 1912 to put down an insurrection. We remember its appearance in Havana at that time. Cuban political agitations were always a motive for musical diffusion.[18]

Figure I.1[19]
Map of Cuba

Historically, musicians based in Havana have been forthcoming in acknowledging the contributions to the son's development made by musicians in the east. When asked who developed the son montuno in Cuba, trumpeter Alfredo "Chocolate" Armenteros told Raúl Fémandez: "Well all of this comes from Oriente...the son is a bit slower, when they add the montuno [to the bolero] it makes it more dynamic."[20]

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[18] Fernando Ortiz, 279-280: "Parece que los bongó llegaron a la Habana traídos de la región de Oriente por la tropa cubana que de la capital fué a aquella provincia el año 1912 a sofocar una insurrección. Recordamos su aparición en la Habana por aqella época. Las agitaciones políticas de Cuba han sido siempre motivo de difusiones musicales.

[19] Map from users.pandora.be/casaparticular/ cuba_maps.htm.

[20] Alfredo "Chocolate" Armenteros, interview by Raúl Fernández, *Jazz Oral History Program*, Smithsonian Institution, New York, 6 July 1996: "Bueno todo eso viene de

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Eulalio Hierrezuelo Ruiz and Herminio "El Diablo" García Wilson were two musicians from Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo who corroborate the view that son, as it was played in Oriente, was largely unknown in 1921 Havana. In an interview with David García, Ruiz states that in 1921:

> In Havana they still didn't know in effect what the son was, what the music of Oriente was. In Havana, what they played in Havana at that time, there were charanga orquestas [flute, violin and percussion ensembles] that played danzones. Danzones are from Havana proper.[21]

Local musicians and historians in Guantánamo present alternatives to the dominant narratives emanating from Havana by focusing on local genres, musical protagonists, and local musical history. These alternatives are not necessarily in opposition to, and often include, parts of national interpretations of history. These alternative local views are presented at conferences on music, at festivals, during demonstrations for tourists, and in local publications for people interested in local history.

The local, Guantanamero view of the son's development is that it started with structurally simpler variants such as nengón and kiribá. Soon the music became *regina*, a repeated melody and choral refrain, which emphasizes vocal improvisation. Changüí was born of regina and ultimately begat son. Throughout these chronologies ensemble types and practices are sometimes presented with specific names of groups and musicians. This local perspective is linear and evolutionist; it aims at recognizing local musical protagonists whose musical contributions are responsible for the development of the son.

Oriente…el son es un poco más lento, a la vez que le ponen el montuno [al Bolero] es para darle un poquito de más brillo."

[21] Eulalio Hierrezuelo Ruiz, interview by David García, Los Angeles, 2 November 1997: "En La Habana todavía no conocían efectivamente lo que era el son, lo que era la música Oriental. En La Habana, lo que se manejaba en La Habana en aquel tiempo, habían

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Like local chronologies of the son's development, the local changüí repertoire is full of specific musicians' names and their activities as well as references to past musical gatherings and local history. Most local musicians know who the musicians in the songs were. These songs serve as sites where collective musical-historical memory is preserved, and through their performance historical consciousness is transmitted.

Local musicologists hold different opinions about whether changüí is part of the son complex or constitutes its own complex (which would include nengón, kiribá, and other regina-type styles), but they are more aware than Habaneros of just how permeable and subject to challenge are the lines which divide genres and ethnic groups in their own region of Guantánamo.[22] Some local musicians view son in ways which are similar to those in which African-American musicians in the United States discuss the blues: it is more than a genre, it is a worldview with numerous musical manifestations.

Historical Overview of Guantánamo

Guantánamo remains geographically isolated from most of Cuba and historically the region had closer trading ties with nearby Caribbean islands than with Havana. Economic data and population statistics demonstrate the decidedly rural character of the Guantánamo province. Located some 910km from Havana and taking its name from the Taíno Indians, Guantánamo was the first region where Columbus sent Diego Velazquez to claim Cuba in 1509.[23] With many rivers running through it, such as the Ríos Toa,

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orquestas charanga que le llamaba, que tocaban danzones. Los danzones son propiamente de La Habana."

[22] Musical competitions are key events where these issues are negotiated.

[23] This actually happened in Baracoa, the easternmost municipio of the province, which became the first capital of Cuba in 1511.

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Jaguaní, Duaba, Miel, Mata, Yumurí, Báez, Nibujón, Quibiján, Macaguany, Macaguanigua, La Mina, Yateras, Sabanalamar, Los Guineos, Jatibonico y Ullao, it is no wonder that the pre-colonial inhabitants named it "land of rivers." Prior to 1976, Guantánamo originally belonged to the all-encompassing province of Oriente that also included the areas known today as Holguín, Santiago de Cuba, Las Tunas, and Granma. As seen in the attached map the province is now divided into 10 *municipios* (counties): (1) El Salvador, (2) Guantánamo, (3) Yateras, (4) Baracoa, (5) Maisí, (6) Imías, (7) San Antonio del Sur, (8) Manuel Tames, (9) Caimanera, and (10) Niceto Pérez (Fig. 1.2).

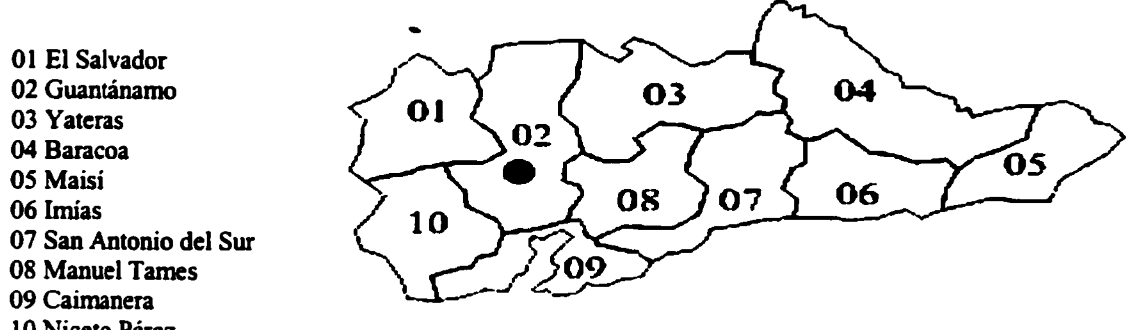

Figure I.2 [24]
Map of Guantánamo

According to Leví Marrero and the Canadian mining companies based in the region, Oriente is richer than the other provinces in minerals such as nickel.[25] Until the beginning of the nineteenth century the province of Guantánamo was largely uninhabited but later could claim to have the sixth city of Cuba.[26] Levi-Marrero's statistics (Guantánamo 64, 700; Caimanera 5,700; San Antonio 1,300; Central Soledad and

[24] Map from http://www.aboutcuba.com/regions/guantanamo.
[25] Leví Marrero, *Geografía de Cuba*, fifth ed. (1950; reprinted Miami: La Moderna Poesía, 1981), 576
[26] Ibid., 611.

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Jamaica 1,245) have been greatly augmented according to recent statistics given by the Cuban government for each municipio of Guantánamo. Today the populations of each municipio are: El Salvador 48,982; Guantánamo 248,171; Yateras 19,773; Baracoa 80,601; Maisí 29,398; Imías 20,022; San Antonio del Sur 26,984; Manuel Tames 15,256; Caimanera 10,428; and Niceto Pérez 16,234.

Agricultural practices have historically been divided according to topography: the mountainous areas are used for coffee cultivation and the valleys are used for sugar production. Latin-American economic historians such as Hoernel write that:

> During the nineteenth century western Cuba developed an increasingly cosmopolitan society and advanced by leaps and bounds into export oriented agriculture. Eastern Cuba, on the other hand, remained more isolated, faced the Caribbean, and continued to produce more for local markets and subsistence...As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Oriente was not all that different from when it had begun, except in those coastal areas where sugar was grown or minerals mined. It was still mostly wooded, isolated, and thinly settled with a considerable portion of its area not in private ownership.[27]

Examining the Cuban Census of 1899, Hoernel shows that Oriente "possessed the most rural and the most native born population [and] the province's Afro-Cuban population figured the highest, both in proportion and in absolute number, in Cuba."[28]

Although substantial migration from Haiti began with the Haitian Revolution in the 1790s, the need for cheap labor after the War of Independence (1895-1898) brought great numbers of Haitian and Jamaican laborers to cut cane throughout the island; their presence was greatest in Oriente, particularly Guantánamo with its proximity to Haiti.[29]

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[27] Robert Bruce Hoernel, "A Comparison of Sugar and Social Change in Puerto Rico and Oriente,Cuba 1898-1959." Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1977, 83.
[28] Ibid., 84.
[29] Chapter 3 is concerned with the connections between changüí and Afro-Haitian genres. Numerous scholars have written on Haitian and Jamaican laborers in Cuba; the reader is referred to Mats Lundahl, "A Note on Haitian Migration to Cuba, 1890-1934," *Cuban*

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Recent scholarship by Jesús Guanche indicates that the population of inter-Caribbean migrants to Cuba was significantly greater in Oriente than in the rest of the island.[30]

The musical results of this first wave of Haitian migration are to be seen and heard in the contradanza, tajona, and tumba francesa. Scholars such as Joel James Figarola believe that vodou and other Afro-Haitian religious practices brought during this time period were absorbed into local Afrocuban religious culture.[31] Early twentieth-century Haitian migration brought rara and méringue to the region as well as other genres.

The construction of the U.S. Naval base in 1902, five miles from the city (in Caimanera), involved large numbers of immigrants from throughout the Caribbean. The base provided jobs and stimulated the local economy; many informants are proud to say they worked on the base, some for 30 years.[32] In 1940 some 10,000 Cubans worked on the base and in 1962 around 3,600.[33] Today some 15 Cubans still pass from Cuban territory to the base each day for work. In general, my informants speak well of the economic impact of the base on the city of Guantánamo. In the 1940s, the *zona de tolerancia* (red light district), also known as *el bayú* (the bayou), had some 800 prostitutes registered in an official log; this area of clubs, bars, and brothels was largely

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Studies 12 no. 2 (1982): 21-36; Marc C. McLeod, "Undesirable Aliens: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism in the Comparison of Haitian and British West Indian Immigrant Workers in Cuba," *Journal of Social History* 31, no. 3 (1998): 599-623; Juan Pérez de la Riva, "Cuba y la migración antillana 1900-1931," *Anuario de Estudios Cubanos*, No. 2 (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1979), 5-75.

[30] Guanche, 32.

[31] Joel James Figarola, "El vodú en Cuba," *Del caribe* 29 (1999): 75.

[32] For a good account of life in Guantánamo and the U.S. Naval base written by a Cuban who former worked there see Pedro A. López Jardo, *Guantánamo y "Gitmo"(Base naval de los Estados Unidos en Guantánamo)* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 2000.

[33] Luisa de León Fournier and Ana Celia Perez Rubio (1991), 10.

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patronized by single U.S. servicemen. A good number of servicemen married local Cuban women and local shopkeepers relate that pesos and dollars were traded one for one. Many changüiseros and local musicians performed both on the base and in the city, but the fare was always North American-styled big band jazz or popular Cuban dance music. If a popular Cuban entertainer such as Beny More could not bring his band with him, he would perform with high-caliber local musical groups.[34] Interestingly, in their interviews all of the changüiseros who worked and performed music on the base made it clear that they never played changüí for North Americans.[35] Perhaps it was too syncopated and raw for the North Americans, or perhaps the changüiseros wished to protect the genre and its associated behavior from outsiders and keep it within the realm of locals.

Today, many Cubans consider Guantánamo to be the poorest province in the country due to its poor record for sugar production and relative lack of tourism. The latter attribute is increasingly important, as tourism has supplanted other industries since the collapse of the Soviet Union and its generous subsidies. Although Guantánamo lacks luxury hotels and beautiful beaches it is arguably at least as rich as other provinces in terms of culture. One might argue that you can't eat culture, hence large numbers of highly educated professionals leave the province looking for coveted jobs in the tourism industry. As mentioned earlier, increased tourism has had some positive effects on

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[34] One such group was La Orquesta de Julio Delgado Orquesta, which featured the brothers Celso and Luis Gómez on drums and trumpet. Both men worked on the base during the day and played with a wide variety of bands.

[35] Pedro Speck, Rácifo Durán (with Los Siete del Jazz), Carlos Borromeo Planché "Cambrón" and others confirmed this.

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changüí by exposing groups of tourists to changüí musicians in the city of Guantánamo, Yateras, and Baracoa.

Historical Overview of Changüí

Don Fernando Ortiz cited G.A. Cavazzi's seventeenth-century reports of a similarly named genre in Africa. Cavazzi observed Congolese musicians performing a dance and music called *quisangüí*. Ortiz wrote that the verb *sanga* means to dance or jump with joy and the prefix *qui* marks a quality in Angolan and Congolese languages.[36] From this linguistic perspective he defined the Cuban word *changüí* as a joyous dance. Additionally, Ortiz gives several definitions of the word changüí on page 192 of his *Nuevo Catauro de Cubanismos*, emphasizing the multiple meanings of the word: a dance and gathering of lower classes, to jump with joy, to trick or deceive someone, and others.[37] The word is used to indicate a party and is often interchanged with words such as *cumbancha*, *cucalambé*, *parranda*, *bachata*, *rumba*, *guateque*, and *rompía*, among others. Interestingly, Rafael Inciarte devoted some time to uncovering the etymology of the word *changüí*. He concluded that the word *guateque* was of Indo-Cuban origin while changüí was of Afrocuban derivation.

Changüí is a musical genre that is specifically linked to certain modes of behavior, which have changed over time. For about a century before the 1959 revolution, which I will call stage one, a changüí was a rural party at which participants consumed

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[36] Fernando Ortiz, *Los bailes y el teatro de los negros en en el folklore de Cuba* (1951; reprinted Madrid, Spain: Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1998), 53.
[37] The liner notes and public relations campaign for *Changüí: Grupo Changüí and Estrellas Campesinas*, Traditional Crossroads CD4290, promote these definitions and class distinctions.

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large quantities of rum, ate roasted pigs, danced, and engaged in musical duels (*controversias*) which included *treseros* (tres players) as well as *trovadores* (improvising singers).[38] Often the treseros would accompany themselves as they sang. According to Inciarte, one occasion for changüí gatherings was the period between Christmas Eve and Three Kings Day (January 6) when musicians and revelers would begin traveling from house to house. One of my informants, Evelia Nobllet Colás a.k.a. "Bella," confirmed that in the countryside these Christmas-oriented changüís began, "[starting on] Christmas eve . . . people were dancing for one week."[39] From around the 1930s, these events would be advertised on the radio, because the participants lived so far from one another. Participants would each bring a chicken, a pig, or some rum and often arrived with their clothes dirty from the trip. Although the concept of the changüí party and traveling from house to house in order to keep the party going has its origins in rural culture, it is not confined to remote mountainous locales; it is also found in the cities and more densely populated regions of the province. Rural areas such as Yateras and El Salvador are held in high esteem and considered to be important places where changüí was and continues to be cultivated. Nevertheless, musicians often perform with sound systems and electric pick-ups to be heard by large audiences. This rural/urban dichotomy will be returned to in subsequent chapters.

At these parties many changüiseros distinguished themselves as vocal improvisers and tres players; songs by and about these musicians form a large part of the changüí repertoire that is performed today (and will be discussed in Chapter 6). Some of these

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[38] The tres is a traditional Cuban guitar-like instrument with three pairs of double courses.
[39] Evelia "Bella" Noblet Colás, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 21 December 1998: "la víspera de nochebuena . . . está una semana la gente bailando."

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musicians include Masó, Logát, and Mosqueda. Virtually all of these musicians from the legendary past were Afrocuban, and with few exceptions each had a French surname. In 1945, Rafael Inciarte urged some of these musicians to form a formal group, and thus the Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, one of the oldest and best-known groups, was born.[40] Brioso and his colleague Luis Morlote will be discussed shortly. Unlike the situation today, there were a number of women who were active as musicians and hosts of changüí gatherings in Guantánamo's changüí scene. These include Agripina Jay a.k.a 'La negra con pelo' (the negress with hair), María Guevara (tres), Tunto Gainza (tres), Chito Latamblé's great grandmother, Atina, who played the *taburete* (bureau), a maracas player named Vivian, Juliana Bosch (bongó), and a woman referred to Cecilia la Baracoesa (tres).[41]

At the time of this writing, the social history for Guántánamo available to me is admittedly thin and warrants further study; reviewing social records and newspapers would probably reveal more specific details. However, many of changüí's legendary protagonists were marginalized Afrocuban laborers who moved in social circles that do not appear to have been thoroughly chronicled. Much of the information about noteworthy musicians has been gathered from oral sources.

Stage two begins after the 1959 revolution and runs through 1989. During the first thirty years after the revolution, Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo became an official professional musical group, which performed changüí locally, nationally, and internationally. The music underwent a folklorization process in which many of its elements were stabilized, including repertoire. Many musicians from the surrounding

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[40] José Cuenca Sosa, "Una fiesta interminable," *Debate* 1, no. 1 (1995): 10.

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rural areas such as Yateras, Las Cidras, Salvador, and Manuel Tames moved to the city of Guantánamo, and some learned to read and write music. By this time, most treseros already had electric pickups on their instruments, and the music was performed on stages with microphones.

Stage 3 begins in 1990 at the start of the post-Soviet "special period" and runs through the present. This stage has brought about more changes in changüí. More local groups have received professional status from the state musical bureaucracy and have participated in staged folkloric presentations of changüí and related genres. One result of the shift to a tourist-based economy after the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the loss of its subsidies is that tourists pay to experience authentic changüí parties in the mountains. Furthermore, the quest for the roots of Cuban music and the Buena Vista phenomenon have brought foreign record companies and film crews to Guantánamo as well. Due to the severe rationing of gas and food, the parties that would have been normal during stage one are restricted to special occasions such as birthdays. Smaller, private gatherings are more conducive for long vocal improvisations and controversias, but some singers sing longer improvisations, such as décimas, regardless of the performance context. Most of the people who knew the great musicians of the legendary past, and most of the musicians who participated in that past, are deceased.

Throughout the course of my fieldwork I have encountered the names of many important musicians involved with changüí. Birth and death dates for many of these musicians have been difficult to obtain; for the purposes of this dissertation, I have divided these musicians into three generational clusters based on information obtained in

[41] In Cuba it is quite common to use bureau or dresser drawers for drumming.

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interviews and on notes by Inciarte, Morlote, and others such as Radamés Sánchez. Some musicians who appear in the third and most recent cluster do not appear in any of Inciarte's notes that I read.

State of Research

The earliest attempts at writing about changüí were made by a team of local musicians/musicologists comprised of Dr. Luis Morlote Ruiz (1903-1994), a dentist, and Rafael Inciarte Brioso, a saxophonist and leader of the municipal band. As almost all of their work remains unpublished, I made copies of their field notes and papers. This massive collection of papers is uncatalogued and in a state of deterioration. Held in the Casa Inciarte, a local branch of the Center for the Investigation of Cuban Music (CIDMUC), these important documents now have a team of individuals dedicated to organizing and preserving them.

The son of Rafael Inciarte Ruiz, director of the municipal band of Santiago de Cuba and an important musician during the war of Independence who fought with the Maceos, Rafael Inciarte Brioso (1909-1991) was born in Santiago de Cuba. A composer, saxophonist, clarinetist, and band director, Inciarte settled in Guantánamo in 1927. There he worked with many musicians, including Conchita Bravo, and directed the municipal band. Inciarte composed at least 142 songs with Morlote as lyricist, including *Sombra*, *Fue en la Primavera*, *Ojos lindos*, *Todo lo tengo ya*, and many others released by Columbia and RCA-Victor. Their teamwork extended into the realm of fieldwork and the investigation of music and folklore in Guantánamo. In their 1996 article, "Un binomio inseparable: Morlote-Inciarte," José Sánchez Guerra and Luis F. Guerra M.

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indicate that Morlote and Inciarte collaborated on at least six unpublished works regarding local music and folklore: "Estudiantina," "Bembé," "Changüí: Folklore Guantanamero," "Mambo," "Tumba Francesa," and "Oriente Musical."[42] I have reviewed the works on *estudiantina* and changüí as well as many notes for other subjects currently held at the Casa Inciarte. I also read many of Inciarte's notes, including several versions of "Changüí: Folklore Guantanamero" (the earliest dated 1949), "La Estudiantina," and "Changüí y Bunga." Inciarte also had a number of pages written on the tuning of the tres in the entire province, based on geography and genre of music. Other less formally organized notes cover the instruments in the changüí ensemble and pieces of interviews with musicians such as Roberto Bautá, Mauré, Chito Latamblé, and various tumba francesa musicians. There are also transcriptions of obscure variants of changüí such as manajú and rompía.

Most interesting are lists of loosely organized changüí groups and where they performed/gathered. These lists indicate that there were many changüí groups and many places where changüí parties were held. In earlier conversations with musicians I was told that all of the legendary changüiseros, many of whom appear in these lists and in photos, were Afrocubans. Not everyone agreed with this, but it was generally accepted. At the age of 89, the venerated singer, Cambrón listed two exceptions, both treseros: one Dominican named Rafael whose mother lived in the Loma del Chivo neighborhood and another whose name he could not recall.

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[42] José Sánchez Guerra and Luis F. Guerra M., "Un binomio inseparable: Morlote-Inciarte" *El Saltadero* 1, no. 1 (1996): 13. The authors confirm that Ortiz was present at the reading of the Tumba Francesa paper.

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Inciarte's notes and lists also supported assertions made by older musicians that there were a good number of female changüiseras in the past, mostly tres players and composers such as Maria Guevara. During the course of my fieldwork it seemed for a moment that a new generation of all-female groups was ready to conquer the world, but groups such as Las Perlas de Changüí, and La Guantanamera did not last more than two years. Although it is still primarily an Afrocuban genre, Cubans of all shades and genders are playing changüí today.

In addition to his work with Inciarte, Luis Morlote published collections of his poetry as well as an interesting book about the history of the city of Guantánamo intended for children. Morlote ultimately left Cuba, residing in the United States until his death.

Figure I.3
Morlote and Inciarte Together, date unknown.
Courtesy of Biblioteca Provincial de Guantánamo.
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Little information has been published on changüí in either Spanish or English. The best available material is written by local musicians and has not been published. In a few cases, the authors distribute photocopies of their works to interested individuals. These case studies are more detailed and include more first-hand technical knowledge than anything that appears in books that survey Cuban music and mention changüí.

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To date, the most prolific author on changüí, local musical practices, and history is Ramón Gómez Blanco (b.1949). Known as Mongo, he has written a collection of works that, although at times esoteric, nonetheless trace the development of the genre and place changüí within the national context as a direct antecedent of son. His *Rasgos étnicos unificados en la formación del changüí* (1996) pulls together most, if not all, of the available published sources on changüí. In 1997 he wrote four pamphlets which are invaluable instructional materials: *El secreto de la marímbula en el changüí*, *Ritmicidad del guayo, las maracas y el güiro en el changüí*, *Secret of the Bongo Changüí*, and *Sintesis morfológico musical del tres: genero changüí.* These pamphlets were written for North American students attending the 1997 summer program in Guantánamo run by the now defunct Caribbean Music and Dance Workshops. Each offers musical transcriptions and an accompanying audiocassette containing many of the transcribed examples played by members of El Septeto Típico de Guantánamo (now Los Universales del Son). Mongo's recent works, written with María Josefa Sánchez Heredia (b.1957), address a variation of changüí known as nengón and the different forms of son found in Oriente as well as their influence on genres throughout the country. These include *Formas nengónicas de la música campesina en la provincia de Guantánamo* (1998) and *Cronología tipológica del son en el alto oriente: influencias para su desarollo en otras zonas del pais* (1999). His article *Transformación morfológica de la guajira Guantanamera* (1996) addresses local origins of Cuba's best-known song. *Luis Martínez Griñan Lili: el clásico del son* (1999), and *Elio Revé* (1999) are biographical sketches of two important local musicians who greatly contributed to the development of Cuban popular music. These last two works were conceived as interactive multimedia

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presentations made with the PowerPoint program and later they were printed as pamphlets.

José Cuenca Sosa is the current (2002) director of the Casa Inciarte. He organizes and runs the changüí competitions each year at the Centro Comunitario de Cultura and has worked with me during interviews and archival research. His article, "Una fiesta interminable," which appeared in a local magazine, *Debate* (1995), details the history of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo and provides insight into its members.

In the mid-1990s, the local historian Augusto Lemus published *Cinco preguntas sobre el changüí*. This pamphlet is not geared toward an academic audience, but it is valuable for understanding the priorities of Cuban musicologists. The pamphlet addresses five questions, which cover the origin of the word *changüí*, historical development of the genre in Oriente, organology, and the history of particular ensembles. The answers cite the work of Ortiz, Inciarte Brioso, and Morlote Ruiz. Lemus currently resides in the U.S. although I have been unable to locate him.

As mentioned earlier, writings of Cuban music scholars who have resided on and off of the island, such as Olavo Alén, Danilo Orozco, Argeliers León, Cristobal Díaz Ayala, Natalio Galán and others, generally treat changüí as a mere variation of son. Of the island-based musicologists who have conducted fieldwork in Guantánamo, only two, Danilo Orozco González and Olavo Alén Rodríguez, have published their results. The recording *Integral del son: bases históricas* (1983), Egrem LD-286, LD-287 (reissued on CD in 1999), contains Danilo Orozco's seminal field recordings of La Familia Valera-Miranda playing nengón and other related styles, and has extensive liner notes written by Orozco. Orozco's liner notes for Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo's *Fiesta changüisera*

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(1983), Siboney/Egrem C274 (reissued on cassette in 1996) provide good background information on Grupo Changüí and explore the differences and similarities between son and changüí, but there are no musical examples, and Orozco's prose is awkward and needlessly complicated, perhaps reflecting the interest in semiotics inspired by Soviet-bloc contacts.

Orozco's articles, such as "Procesos socioculturales y rasgos de identidad en los géneros musicales con referencia especial a la música cubana" (1992), argue that the complexes and sub-complexes to which genres belong are permeable and not fixed. He supports pan-regional studies, making the case that relationships between genres across national boundaries need to be investigated. Orozco calls for investigation of broader topics, such as transnational musical, dance-related, gestural responses to sociopolitical and psychological forces. He is not interested in organizing the development of genres chronologically.

Although lacking significant ethnographic data, Olavo Alén Rodríguez's work on *tumba francesa* (Alén 1986 and 1995) is relevant to this discussion because it is practically the only book-length musicological analysis of an eastern Cuban musical genre. Alén's *La música de las sociedades de tumba francesa en Cuba* (1986) is a musicological study of a genre of Afro-Haitian music particular to eastern Cuba. Like Orozco, the author was trained in East Germany and this somewhat scientistic influence is visible throughout the work, in the form of large tables comparing durational values within rhythmic patterns. The accompanying album, *Antología de la música afrocubana, Vol. 7: Tumba Francesa* (1983) Areito/Egrem LD-3606, is helpful, but the liner notes are not. Besides the proclivity towards technical and quantitative measures of rhythms, the

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scant ethnographic information in this book is drawn from fieldwork in the provinces of Guantánamo and Santiago de Cuba. Many of the same musicians who have performed in the *Sociedades de Tumba Francesa* have concurrently performed in changüí groups, making the brief ethnographic and musicological work in this book relevant to the study of changüí.

Helio Orovio's, *El son, la guaracha y la salsa*, published in Santiago de Cuba by Editorial Oriente, makes brief mention of changüí and a few protagonists. In addition, Ortiz's writings on Afrocuban musical instruments are available as individual pamphlets, but those concerned with the marímbula and guayo make no mention of changüí.

The *Roots of Rhythm* (1989) video series has a brief appearance by Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo.[43] In one scene, Harry Belafonte ponders a possible connection between Jamaican folk music and changüí. In the excellent BBC/Arena documentary, *What's Cuba Playing At?* [*¿Qué se toca Cuba?*] (1983), Orozco explains the relationship between changüí and tumba francesa. In 1998, the Centro de Investigación y Desarollo de la Música Cubana (CIDMUC) produced a pamphlet called *Estudios Musicológicos: Provincia Guantánamo*, written by María Elena Vinueza, Carmen María Sáenz, Laura Vilar, Rolando Pérez, Victoria Eli, and Olavo Alén. This 59-page pamphlet considers changüí as a style of son and mostly offers measurements of instruments and names of both professional and amateur groups in the region.

The local newspaper, *Venceremos*, frequently runs articles that provide good information on specific changüiseros such as Rácifo Durán, Chito Latamblé, and Pedro

[43] *Roots Of Rhythm: A Worldwide Celebration Of Latin Music From Africa To The Caribbean And America - With Harry Belafonte* (3 Video Set). Cultural Research And

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Speck as well as on other aspects of local musical culture. Relevant articles on history also appear in publications such as *Ambito*, *El Mangüí*, *El Saltadero*, *Bohemia*, and *Del Caribe*.

To date, Maya Roy is perhaps the only non-Cuban scholar to have written anything regarding changüí. She adheres to the classic genre classification system and defines changüí as a rural antecedent of son from the eastern region of Guantánamo.[44] Roy's assertion that changüí is primarily a rural music is ironic because at the time of her interviews (1990), two of her informants were members of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, a group both active in the city of Guantánamo and representative of the urban changüí style. This underscores another interesting point about the genre: like many genres in Cuba and elsewhere, changüí resists easy classification as rural or urban. Changüí has rural features such as lyrics that emphasize local events, acoustic performance settings, and a unique dance that stresses upbeats. It also has urban features such as the use of electric pick-ups and amplification systems, and professional groups with commercial recordings. In Cuba, this is a common phenomenon; many genres of Cuban music associated with rural or urban populations are often performed in any locale regardless of traditional associations. There are punto guajiro groups with Afrocuban musicians in Havana and Guantánamo despite the fact that punto guajiro is alleged to be a rural genre performed by white Hispanic-Cubans in the center and far west of the island. Similarly, there are Havana-style rumba and Santería folklore groups in Guantánamo and Santiago de Cuba. One reason for the diffusion of folkloric genres is

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Communication, Inc. in association with KCET/Los Angeles, 1989. 180 minutes. Videocassette. Produced and Directed by Howard Dratch and Eugene Rosow. Tape 1.

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that a vast number of folklore specialists, who have been trained in the national arts school system, ultimately settle throughout the country when they begin their teaching careers.

One source yet to be explored is a manuscript collection at the Boston Public library catalogued as the Theodore Brooks Letters. Brooks lived in Guantánamo from 1896-1898 and kept an account of his experiences, which merits review.

Until recently, changüí groups seldom traveled beyond Cuba. To say that performances by changüí groups in the United States have been few and far between is an understatement. Thus the reader is encouraged to seek out the CDs listed in the discography.

In 1989, Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo performed at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Their performances were recorded and released on the CD, *Cuba in Washington*. In addition, the Afro-Haitian folklore group Banrrará has visited the United States on a few occasions. On Friday, February 16, 2001, they came to New York and performed at Symphony Space for the World Music Institute. This group from Guantánamo, now based in Havana, presented a program titled "Carnival Music and Dance of Cuba." The program included changüí, tajona, son, and gagá, as well as popular dance musics such as salsa and merengue.

Relevance, Research Plan and Methodology

In researching changüí, I have found that musicians in Guantánamo move back and forth between changüí, son, rumba, and Afro-Haitian genres with ease and fluidity.

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[44] Maya Roy, *Musiques Cubaines* (Arles, France: Cité de la musique/Actes Sud, 1998),

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For me, this raised questions about the nature of the relationship between changüí, son, and Afro-Haitian musical genres. Listening to stories and songs about figures from the legendary past revealed a past which most people outside of Guantánamo know little or nothing about. As I attended more festivals and competitions, it became clearer why the genre has become emblematic of the larger battle over the telling of history and the longstanding rivalry between eastern and western Cuba.

The richness of the changüí genre calls for increased scholarly attention. This richness consists of historical information about musicians from the past found in changüí songs, the uniqueness of the genre's musical characteristics, and its specific performance techniques. Local musicologists have been largely alone in their desire to collect information and study this genre. In general, they do not have the resources to record interviews with important changüiseros or preserve old documents. In the past three years, several key figures in the music's development have died. Older musicians hold the answers to many questions about a music that is rapidly changing.

As a professional musician who has performed and recorded Caribbean music and jazz around the world, I had often seen the word changüí in Cuban music monographs, but could never find an adequate explanation of the genre. Early on in my research, it was apparent that the major Cuban musicologists who published anything containing the word *changüí* never really scratched the surface. Liner notes for recordings also left something to be desired. This dearth of information led me to travel to Guantánamo in 1997 to find some answers.

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Since 1997, I have made five trips to Guantánamo, each for two to three weeks. The focus of these trips was necessarily wide, and in the end I found as many questions as answers. I attended performances by local folkloric ensembles in a variety of genres and learned to play all of the instruments in the changüí ensemble. I began to interview the oldest changüiseros, many of whom were in their late 80s and subsequently passed away. The number of interviewees to this date exceeds thirty, including follow-up interviews. All told, I now have over 100 hours of videotaped interviews and performances. On each trip, I recorded existing recordings and learned pieces in the repertoire that were never recorded or notated. During four of these trips, I attended cultural festivals and musical competitions, even competing when possible as both a composer and instrumentalist. This helped me to distinguish essential musical and social behavior from unacceptable musical and social behavior. Musicians, dancers, and composers encouraged me to actively participate and were very interested in seeing me play and ask questions. In many situations participation at parties as well as formal and informal musical events facilitated discussions and answered questions that might not have made sense if asked directly. On my most recent trip, as mentioned I looked through archival material and notes by the most prominent local musicologist, Rafael Inciarte Brioso, and his colleague, Dr. Luis Morlote Ruiz.

The material collected during these five trips has been catalogued and analyzed. Relevant pieces of music and interviews have been transcribed, enabling me to present a more cohesive historical picture and more detailed musical analysis. Finally, in 1999 and 2000, I presented three conference papers on my research.

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Learning How to Play Changüí

Two years before my first trip to Cuba, and before my lessons with Guillermo "Bule" Mustelier, I had taught myself to play the tres and cuatro at the end of college by listening to records and playing in bands. As mentioned, before going to Guantánamo, I had never encountered anyone who knew anything about changüí instrumental technique. This prompted me to go with Caribbean Music and Dance, a San Francisco-based organization, to study changüí, son, and the music of Oriente. After landing in Havana, we spent the night at Havana's ENA (National School for the Arts), where a night watchman told me to beware of hot-tempered and dangerous Orientales. This was the first derogatory comment I had personally heard a Habanero make about Oriente. The next day we flew to Santiago de Cuba and those of us who had signed up to study the music of Oriente went by bus to Guantánamo. The rest of the group remained in Santiago de Cuba. During the bus ride to Guantánamo, which would later be a common route for me in subsequent visits, I noticed several rural settlements such as Alto Songo and La Maya, whose names I recognized from songs. After we arrived at the Hotel Guantánamo, we were fed some of the greasiest meals I have ever had the privilege of tasting. In the evening we were treated to a concert by the municipal band and then introduced to our instructors. That evening I met Guillermo "Bule" Mustelier, Andrés Fistó Cobas a.k.a. "Taveras," and Marcelino Ruiz; I was truly excited to personally meet the musicians that I only knew via their recordings.

My lessons began the next morning after a fifteen-minute bus ride aboard a Chinese bus that would often need to get pushed by us passengers so that the driver could pop the clutch. Lessons were given at the local music school, a large open space with

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long patios, a good deal of sunlight, and large classrooms. During the course of my lessons, the sounds of carnival drums could be heard across the building. My tres teacher, Bule, saw to it that, as a tresero, I understood the differences between son and changüí.

On a number of days in the late morning or early afternoon, Ramón Gómez Blanco a.k.a. Mongo would give us lecture/demonstrations about changüí and son. From these lectures I was able to essentialize the differences between the two genres and get important bibliographic references on son, changüí, and more generally, the development of Cuban music. Mongo also pointed out the main differences between the dance styles for these genres. This was also the first time that I learned of Inciarte's writings and work.

In the afternoons, the students played with our instructors in an ensemble, learning how the individual parts fit together in a changüí group. There was one student who studied bongó and another who sang. Son pieces came together more easily than changüí pieces, if only because of the high degree of syncopation and the push and pull of changüí that son lacks. Through persistence, improvement came to the ensemble after a few days. During this first trip I learned to play all of the instruments in the changüí ensemble, except the bongó and marímbula. At night, and on day trips to Baracoa and Yateras, I took every opportunity to jam with musicians in a variety of contexts and on a variety of instruments. These treses were playable, but they often felt as though they were constructed of chicken wire and wood.

On subsequent trips I continued to play with musicians in a variety of situations such as carnival performances, tres playing competitions, and at parties and other

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informal gatherings. If a few musicians gathered in a house, a bit of food and rum would transform the setting into a *descarga* (jam). During these situations I learned new licks, songs, and heard stories about different musicians. All of this hanging out proved to be extremely helpful to this study.

In 1999, I took a bongó lesson with Segundo Speck Santryll in order to solidify my understanding of the instrument's role in the ensemble. Segundo wrote out several patterns that we worked on during the lesson. In contrast, I learned to play the marímbula only by watching, asking questions, and listening.

Outline of Chapters

This dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter 1, "*Como se toca se baila, como se baila se toca*: The Instruments and their Roles in the Changüí Ensemble," takes its title from a changüí song which describes one important aspect of the genre: it is danced as it's played, it is played as it's danced. Specific patterns of action on the part of musicians and dancers are labeled and related to *síncopa* (syncopation) and *contratiempo* (upbeats). Unlike most Cuban musical genres, changüí is not bound by the clave pattern. Bodily movements, which are made during these patterns of action, aid in defining the notion of síncopa and provide clues as to how the musicians conceive of these patterns. An examination of specific terminology associated with changüí performance, and of the spatio-motor movement linked to performative actions and dance, provides the listener with insight into the structure of the music as it is performed in Guantánamo.

The tres figures centrally in changüí, more so than in other Cuban genres. For this reason, Chapter 2, "Styles of Tres Improvisation," focuses on the improvisational

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styles and techniques of three important treseros whose playing best exemplifies the genre.

Chapter 3, "The Afro-Haitian Presence in Eastern Cuba and its Significance in the Development of the Cuban *Son,*" shows the connection between changüí and local Afro-Haitian genres such as *tumba francesa,* among others, and concludes with specific musical connections between changüí and son in order to show how the Haitian diaspora in eastern Cuba contributed to the development of the Cuban son. In addition, the changüí dance style will be compared with the dance styles for son and tumba francesa. Although Afro-Haitian genres such as tumba francesa and gagá have been studied thoroughly, these cultural manifestations of intra-Caribbean migration are seldom considered in relation to changüí and son.

Chapter 4, "Historicity and Self-Referencing in Changüí Songs," presents several changüí songs along with their associated stories. Textual analysis of the songs provides insight into the historicity and self-referencing nature of the genre and the ways in which past events and musicians are inscribed into local oral history. The lyrics of many songs point to the competitive atmosphere in which the treseros of the legendary past operated. Changüí lyrics may report disputes on such topics as musicianship, improvising skills, reputation, and history of the genre; many songs express regional pride.

Chapter 5, "The Changüí Complex Inside and Outside of Guantánamo," examines changüí as a complex of genres that includes many related variations heard both within and outside of the province of Guantánamo. Part One discusses variations that are heard within the province, such as kiribá, nengón, and regina, as well as more recent, lesser-known variations, each of them executed by the same group of instruments that performs

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changüí. The regional varieties of changüí, as performed in rural areas surrounding the city of Guantánamo, are compared with urban changüí. In Part Two the influence of changüí on popular national genres such as son and salsa is discussed through an examination of three major musical personalities from Guantánamo: Luis "Lilí" Martínez Griñán, Herminio "El Diablo" García Wilson, and Elio Revé Matos. In addition, a look at commercial recordings by musicians whose work references changüí supports the argument for a separate classification of changüí as its own musical/social/dance complex with variations.

In Chapter 6, "Festivals, State-Sponsored Musical Competitions for Changüí, and the Process of Folklorization," state-sponsored musical competitions held in three consecutive years are compared, demonstrating how these musical competitions are sites where the processes of musical change are most visible. Although the current forms of competition differ from those of the past, the newer forms can be seen as being in line with the tradition of competition that pervaded the legendary past of changüí performance.

In the conclusion, the specific musical elements that link changüí to son are reviewed and reconsidered, bringing the discussion back to the issues and claims about the history of the Cuban son and to the argument that changüí merits consideration as its own genre complex. A glossary provides definitions of important terms and concepts pertaining to changüí. Finally, a discography of changüí recordings is provided in addition to the bibliography.

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Chapter 1: *Como se toca se baila, como se baila se toca*: The Instruments and Their Roles in the Changüí Ensemble.[1]

La música llamada changüí, Marcelino Ruiz

La música llamada changüí
es buena y medicinal.
Esta se puede tocar
con instrumentos criollos
No es una música loca,
si lo que es
acentuada para bailar.
Montuno: Como se toca se baila, como se baila se toca.

The music called changüí
is good and medicinal
You can play it
With creole instruments.
It's not crazy music
What it is, is accented so you can dance
Refrain: It is danced as it's played, it is played as it's danced.

Writing about African music in 1969, Hugh Tracey suggested that: "the playing of an instrument . . . can also be considered from the point of view of the movements involved, which may be relatively as important as the sound produced . . . the 'dance', as it were, upon the instrument. Body-instrument-dance-music, may all be usefully considered as aspects of one continuum."[2] Other scholars, such as John Baily and Peter Driver, have continued to work in this area. Twenty-three years after Tracey they wrote: "As analysts of the musical process, our understanding of the issues involved has progressed from a consideration of ergonomic factors which constrain performance and

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[1] An earlier version of this chapter was read as a paper "Como se toca se baila, como se baila se toca: Syncopation and Spatio-Motor Movement in Changüí," for the panel, *Ethnomusicology of the Body* at the 45th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, November 3, 2000, Toronto, Canada.
[2] Hugh T. Tracey, *Codification of African Music and Textbook Project: A Primer of Practical Suggestions for Field Research* (Roodeport: International Library of African Music, 1969), 27.

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shape music structure, to the study of spatio-motor thinking as a central component of musical cognition."[3]

Changüí is a genre of Cuban music that consciously delimits and manipulates levels of rhythm. This chapter examines the terminology associated with changüí performance as well as the spatio-motor movement linked to performative actions and dance, in order to provide the reader and listener with insight into the structure of the music, as it is performed in Guantánamo. Bodily movements that are made during these patterns of action aid in defining the notion of síncopa and provide clues as to how the musicians conceive of these patterns. Unlike most Cuban musical genres, changüí is not bound by the clave pattern. The reader is referred to Musical Example 1.1 at the end of the chapter for a transcription of each instrument's part.

The Changüí Ensemble

The changüí ensemble consists of five instruments. In common practice, two of the five instrumentalists also sing. Each instrument has a specific operation within the ensemble, but only three have room for embellishment or improvisation. Each instrument's pattern has its own degree of síncopa and contratiempo. Looking at the musical examples at the end of this chapter, one can see what the Cuban scholar Argeliers León has repeatedly stated about Afrocuban music: that it is structured in terms of timbral

[3] John Baily and Peter Driver, "Spatio-Motor Thinking in Playing Folk Blues Guitar," *The World of Music* 34, no. 3 (1992): 57.

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levels.[4] The instruments for a typical changüí ensemble are presented below in order of increasing importance.

The least complicated instrument is the *guayo* or *guallo*. Similar in shape and construction to the Dominican *güira*, it is a metal scraper, which is usually scraped with a single metal rod or a bone.[5] The guayo is held in the left hand and scraped with the right hand. Right-hand movement always follows the three-stroke sequence, down-down-up.

The guayo enters with the other instruments after the tres plays the *llamada de montuno* (literally 'call of the mountain,' referring to a repeated responsorial pattern called the *montuno*) two or three times; this opening melodic/rhythmic pattern played by the tres is the same as the choral refrain. It is common for either the guayo player or the *maraquero* (maracas player) to give the ensemble a vocal cue in the form of a shout prior to the *ejecución colectiva* (collective execution). This means that every other instrument in the ensemble will enter at the same time. A downward motion made with the player's entire body often accompanies the shout.[6] The purpose of the shout is to prepare the ensemble to attack at the same point and to 'psych up' the ensemble. The lead vocalist in most changüí ensembles is either the guayo player or the maraquero and sings melodic material, which adds to the notion of síncopa. In changüí, the main melodic line is viewed as syncopated while the guayo and maracas maintain the main 'downbeat'. Some

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[4] Argeliers León, "Notes toward a Panorama of Popular and Folk Musics," in *Essays on Cuban Music: North American and Cuban Perspectives*, trans. and ed. Peter Manuel (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 6.
[5] During fieldwork I have also seen musicians use screwdrivers and knitting needles.
[6] Former maraquero (maracas player) for Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, Antonio Cisneros Arnaud earned his *apodo* (nickname), "Ñico Ya" from his inimitable shout: *¡Ya!*

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lead singers who also play or played guayo include Cambrón, Chago Guayo, Arsenio Eleno Rodríguez, Jesús Álvarez, and José Andrés Rodríguez.

The *maracas* used in changüí are standard and no different from those used for son. They can be made from any number of sources depending on availability. Besides the usual gourds, plastic materials and wood are common. The changüí maraca pattern serves a function similar to the guayo, although it is here that the notion of contratiempo is first mentioned by musicians when discussing this genre. Whichever hand is playing the downbeat, the other hand is said to be providing contratiempo. Usually the right hand of the maracas is playing the guayo pattern while the left hand provides contratiempo following the sequence right-right-left.

There are many different ways to play this same pattern: side-to-side, on the knees, twisting the wrists, etc. Some lead singers who are also maraqueros include Pedro Speck, Pipi, Ariel Daudinot Brooks, O'Neil Revé Chibas, Justo Kindilan, Julio Valier, and José Antonio Moreaux Jardines.

The *marimbula* or *marimba* is a large lamellaphone of Bantu origin, which functions as the bass instrument in the ensemble.[7] The performer sits on top of the instrument with his or her legs apart and places the hands between them to play the keys. The hand positions are constantly changing, because one hand normally strikes the front of the instrument *para llevar el tiempo*, "to lift or carry the time."

The *botija* or *botijuela* (clay jug) was the bass instrument of choice prior to the marímbula; today it is used only for folkloric presentations. Local musicians cite 1929 as

[7] In his article, "West African and Haitian Influences on the Ritual and Popular Music of Carriacou, Trinidad, and Cuba," *Black Music Research Journal* 18, no.1/2 (1996),

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the year when the marímbula gained wider use in Guantánamo, crediting Juan Marimba, a player from Santiago, as one of the first important popularizers of the instrument's use in changüí. In the Guantánamo region, most marímbulas have at least six keys, if not more. José "Nino" Olivares (b.1919), the oldest member of the Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, is recognized as the first marimbero to add extra keys to his instrument, performing with a nine-key marímbula.

Unlike those of the guayo and the maracas, the role of this instrument allows for some improvisation. During the tres solo, the basic pattern is reduced to one attack or stroke on two keys simultaneously. This contributes audibly to the overall desired achievement of síncopa. Scholars such as Ramón Gómez Blanco and Donald Thompson have indicated specific tunings for the marímbula.[8] Fernando Ortiz and María Elena Vinueza González do not indicate specific tunings, although Vinueza's transcriptions use specific pitches.[9] In the Dominican Republic, Rafael Solano reports that as used in the 1940s the instrument "only produces indefinite sounds, something deducible from an instrument without tuning."[10] In my experience listening to changüí recordings, interviewing marimberos, and attending rehearsals and performances, it is accurate to say that the instrument is <u>not</u> usually tuned in any way to the tres or another reference point

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Donald Hill mistakenly labels the marímbula as *changüí*, claiming the genre takes its name from this instrument (p.192).

[8] Ramón Gómez Blanco, "El secreto de la marímbula en el changüí," Guantánamo, 1997. Donald Thompson, "A New World Mbira: The Caribbean Marímbula," *African Music Society Journal* 5, no. 4 (1975): 140-148.

[9] Fernando Ortiz, *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana*, vol. 2 (1952; reprint, Madrid, Spain: Editorial Música Mundana Maqueda; La Habana, Cuba: Fundación Fernando Ortiz, 1996), 327-341. María Elena Vinueza González, "Marímbula," *Instrumentos de la música folclórico-popular cubana,* vol. 1 (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1997), 170-178.

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when playing changüí. Some changüiseros do try to match the marímbula's keys to the tonic, subdominant and dominant pitches of the main key used by the tres player in their respective ensemble. Ultimately, precision of pitch is not as important as tone quality. Therefore, tonic and dominant pitches are not always consistent between the tres and the marímbula. Often the tuning difference between the tres and the marímbula is interesting and unexpected. When the marímbula enters with the other instruments after the llamada de montuno has passed twice, it plays a long flourish, which reaches all of the keys. The player then plays the basic marímbula pattern during the verse section of the song. Embellishments are usually saved for the climax and decrescendo sections of the song. Once the choral refrain and vocal improvisation begin, the marímbula begins to add more variations. During the tres solo a constant pattern is maintained, and during the final climax and decrescendo another pattern is usually heard.

The notion of síncopa is best demonstrated in the role of the tresero. The tres holds a position of great importance in the musical culture of Cuba. Helio Orovio writes that in 1892 Nene Manfugas was the first person to bring the instrument from its place of origin, Baracoa in the Guantánamo province, to Santiago de Cuba.[11] In the past, the body of the instrument was similar to that of a guitar but smaller in size. Eventually, musicians began making a tres from a "classical" nylon-string or Spanish guitar. When a tres is made from a converted six-string nylon-string guitar, a tail-piece is essential to relieving the tremendous tension of the steel strings. The instrument has three double courses. The course closest to the player's head is tuned in octaves with the higher, lighter gauged

[10] Rafael Solano, *Letra y música: relatos autobiográficos de un músico dominicano* (República Dominicana: Biblioteca Taller, 1992), 147.

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string on the outside and the heavier lower pitched string below it. The center course consists of two strings in unison, and the two strings of the top course (furthest from the player's head), also tuned in octaves, are positioned so as to mirror the bottom two strings. It is conceivable that this symmetry is purely cosmetic, but the setup allows a skilled player to give the auditory illusion of having an infinite range.

The instrument is played with a plectrum made of metal or tortoise shell. Tortoise shell is preferred for its flexibility, but shaping the plectrum can be difficult as the material is flake-like and easily breakable. This 'pick' is usually longer than those used and manufactured in the United States for electric or acoustic guitars. It is a long oblong shape at least an inch and a half in length.

People who are unfamiliar with changüí often do not realize that the tres is playing offbeats. In August of 1999, a bass player from Guantánamo, who performs both orchestral and popular music in Santiago de Cuba, explained to me that both the high degree of syncopation and the complexity of the rhythmic structure of the music was what kept many musicians away from the genre. He specifically singled out the role of the tresero remarking that "cuando el tresero está montado, ssssshhhh, olvida eso" (when the tres player is mounted/possessed [syncopated to the point of being way off the common pulse], shit, forget about it). Even when the tresero is not pushing the offbeats too far ahead of the common pulse, to most new listeners the tres sounds rushed or out-of-sync with the rest of the ensemble's groove. Right-hand picking technique epitomizes the physical embodiment of syncopation. Treseros in the Guantánamo region strike each string with downstrokes only. This motion accentuates the music's 'offbeat aesthetics'

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[11] Helio Orovio, *Diccionario de la música cubana: biográfico y técnico* (1981; reprint, La

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and exemplifies what Baily and Driver would label the "motor structure" of this particular style.[12] The only time upstrokes are used is to achieve an echo effect known as *doblando*. This is essentially a quick tremolo, but it is used less and less by contemporary treseros and marks an older or more individual style. Currently it is only used during *descargas* (instrumental improvisations).[13] This technique is the signature of tres masters Reyes 'Chito' Latamblé (1918-93), Julian Valier (1929-99), and Guillermo 'Bule' Mustelier (b.1923). After hearing one note by Chito Latamblé, an informed listener could positively identify his playing.[14] Latamblé and others also rhythmically strike the front surface of the tres with the pick when playing. This is clearly audible on the recording discussed in this chapter.

The tuning of the tres, combined with the limited harmonic range of the music, facilitates a downstroke-only picking technique for this particular genre of music. The most common tuning for the tres is gG-cc-Ee, referred to as do-mi-sol, not *sol do mi.*[15]

Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1992), 481.

[12] Baily and Driver, 63.

[13] Covering improvisation and technique, Chapter 3 is exclusively devoted to the changüí tres style.

[14] Giovanni Giuriati's research in the area of Quantum Theory of Music supports such a notion. Giuriati discusses a teenager who was able to identify 500 different pop songs after hearing one second of the music. Similarly his analysis of five bassoonists playing the same excerpt revealed that 1/4 second was all that was needed to determine their difference. Two of Giuriati's articles on the subject are "Research on sound. The performer/instrument relationship in an example of sonic analysis," in *Electronic Proceedings of the X European Seminar in Ethnomusicology*, ed. Peter Cooke. (Oxford: University of Edinburgh, 1994), available online at http://www.music.ed.ac.uk/research/conferences/esem/index.html and "QTM, a New Perspective for Sonic Research," *World Music Reports* 1, no. 3 (1999): 14-45.

[15] Inciarte's fieldnotes and conversations with musicians indicate that there are many more tres tunings such as *Falsete* (fF-cc-Gg), *Por 7* (eE-dd-Gg), and *Tono Baracoeso* (dD-bb-Gg), among others. In many cases tunings correspond to geographical location and/or genre or songtype. Cubans use the solfège system, but tres players in Guantánamo

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Rafael Inciarte wrote a short treatise on tres tunings, which also include aA-dd- Ff, and other tunings as well. Glancing at the transcription (Table 1.1), one can see how conveniently the pertinent notes lie on the instrument's fingerboard in the open, uncapoed tuning, especially for songs in major and minor versions of Eb, G, F, and A:

Table 1.1
The Tres Fingerboard

	fret								
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
pitch	e	f	f#	g	g#	a	a#	b	c
	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C
	c	c#	d	d#	e	f	f#	g	g#
	c	c#	d	d#	e	f	f#	g	g#
	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#
	g	g#	a	a#	b	c	c#	d	d#

It is no coincidence that most changüí songs are playable within a space of four frets; higher frets and positions are reserved for improvisation sections. The economy of the tuning is also highly appropriate to the genre, as chromaticism is limited. Thus, as Baily and Driver suggest about an instrument's tuning: "The hypothesis that this [tuning] arrangement encourages spatial thinking suggests that musical patterns are remembered and executed not solely as aural patterns, but as sequences of movements, and that the music is therefore represented cognitively in terms of movement patterns which have visual, kinaesthetic, tactile as well as auditory repercussions."[16]

The reader is directed to the llamada de montuno for a well-known changüí song, *Así es el changüí*, track 5 from the CD *¡Ahora Sí! Here Comes Changüí* (1995) Corazon CORA121. This figure is played two to three times before the ensemble

do not use it to describe tunings. Rather the chord that is rendered will be named as if it were not inverted.
[16] Baily and Driver, 62.

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enters.[17] Tablature for this pattern reveals the ease with which one can play the motive while belying the complexity of the syncopation. It is important to note that Reyes "Chito" Latamblé, the great tres player, would often play the verse of every song after the rest of the ensemble entered. This instrumental rendering of the song would provide a sort of preview for the listener and would feature some ingenious melodic and harmonic embellishments. This practice has been maintained by his successors in Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo and a few other groups as well. The tres is obligated to play *pasos de calle* (literally 'steps in the street') between each line of the verse. These are arpeggiations of whichever triad a line of the verse ends on, usually tonic, dominant, or subdominant. While these figures are cadential they also serve to prepare the singer for the next line. These are easily audible between each line of verse.

This is an interesting use of an archaic term: *paso de calle* appears to be a derivative of the Spanish *pasacallo*, "originally a type of ripresa or ritornello that appeared early in the seventeenth century for use with songs accompanied by the [five-course] Spanish guitar."[18] The pasacallo generally consists of a four measure phrase that follows the harmonic sequence I-IV-V-I (Major) or i-iv-V-I (minor). In contrast, pasos de calle in changüí performance practice never outline more than a single chord. Interestingly, pasos de calle are always four measures in length. Perhaps the term came into wider use in eastern Cuba as European contredanses practiced by the newly arrived (1790s) French plantocracy were diffused. Although the origins of the term *pasos de*

[17] Many songs have the same llamada del montuno, so often one has to wait for the lyrics to begin before determining the actual song.
[18] Richard Hudson, *The Folia, The Saraband, The Passacaglia, and The Chaconne: The Historical Evolution of Four Forms That Originated in Music for the Five-Course*

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calle are speculative, authors such as Natalio Galán have speculated as to its derivations from earlier Spanish musical practices that had been introduced to Cuba via Spanish colonization and creolized thereafter. In the following passage, Galán offers his understanding of how this process created the song *Guantanamera*:

> Cuba has taken possession of European traditions and, with the rhythmic sauce of its cultural mixing, has seasoned [musical] surprises, establishing them in such an original way that they appear to have been created by the imagination of a lone individual. For the Cuban, the [song] Guantanamera was born in the Radio Havana of the 1930s, without judging—who would have thought—how it corresponded to the Pasacallo of the Creole bolero of 1830, which at the same time was imitating the Spanish Pasacalle of 1730, echo of the passacaglia that filled the European Baroque, which had also spread throughout the eastern province of Cuba in [an unknown] year, becoming a folkloric event, its occurrence resulting in [Cubans] considering it an invention of intuitively musical mulattos. Between 1492, when Cuba made its entrance in the renaissance logic for the first time, and 1930, enough years had passed that a cultural sedimentation was created from the flood of events that occurred, giving birth to the resulting guantanamera.[19]

Another quintessential characteristic of changüí is that the tres must double the vocal line note for note; both move in contratiempo. After the verse has been sung, the tres plays the llamada de montuno during the choral refrain and vocal improvisation. The tres only departs from this role when it is given an opportunity to improvise. The montuno can go on endlessly, and this is the characteristic that makes it most conducive for controversias and tres descargas to take place. When a changüí accompaniment is used with a choral refrain for these purposes, particularly *controversias*, the style is known as *regina*. The tres player does not play any pasos de calle when the regina takes place.

Spanish Guitar, Vol. 3: The Pasacaglia. (Hänsler-Verlag: American Institute of Musicology, 1982), xiii.
[19] Galán, 315.

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Finally we will address the most complex instrument in the ensemble, the *bongó de monte* (literally 'mountain bongó,' a bongó without tuning lugs). The *bokú* is a single-headed membranophone found throughout Cuba, which was used in early changüí groups.[20] Today, when played in a changüí group, it is only used in staged folklore presentations. The bongó de monte is the drum currently used in changüí. The instrument was originally made from two *bokús* that were attached by a rope and slung over the drummer's knee.

Citing Morlote, Ortiz writes that the bongó of Guantánamo is the progenitor of other bongó-type instruments in Cuba.[21] For Ortiz the bongó is a "mulatto, but darker" instrument created in Cuba proper rather than Africa; on this basis, he makes a strong case for its Creoleness.[22]

The bongó de monte is larger than those found in son and salsa groups. The drumheads are made of goat skin and tacked on to the wood body with small nails. The instrument has no tuning lugs so the skin must be tightened by heating and loosened with water or hard repeated strokes. Before a performance it is common to see musicians pour rum, or another combustible, into a bottle cap and light a flame over which the instrument is held. Usually just the *macho* (male, smaller head) is tuned. The pitches of the skins are lower than son bongos and even lower than most *tumbadoras* (conga drums). This depth of pitch facilitates certain strokes and sonic possibilities particular to the genre and style. When playing son and other genres, the instrument is held between the player's

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[20] Fernando Ortiz, *Instrumentos*, vol. 2, 34-36. Ortiz has an entire entry on the bokú where he explains that its name, construction, and use are indicative of a possible hybrid of Calabar and Bantu elements.
[21] Ibid., 277.

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legs with the *hembra* (female) head on the drummer's right and the *macho* (male) on the left, but when playing changüí, the bongó is positioned with the *hembra* (larger, female) head on the drummer's left-hand side and the *macho* (smaller, male) on the right. Changüiseros reason that this positioning is more conducive to playing changüí.

In the dominant style of changüí, the bongó player seldom 'marks' time with a standardized ostinato (as s/he might do in son and other genres), but instead improvises. Although there is no standard time-keeping pattern, the bongocero accents offbeats and often beat four. The rhythmic base of the music is maintained throughout performance by the other instruments and the singers in a given ensemble. After the llamada de montuno is played two to three times, the *bongocero* (bongó player) executes a five-stroke roll on the hembra. This roll must line up exactly with the entrance of the other instruments. Once every instrument is in, the bongocero begins to riff. The most common, recurring riff is notated in Musical Example 1.1. The bongocero will often play rhythms that echo the rhythms of the text and place such embellishments during the pasos de calle between each line of the vocal melody. Similarly, bongó riffs can be seen as responding to an improvising tresero or vocalist's inspiraciones. For the most part, the bongó player improvises his part in a similar way as the quinto in rumba or the premiér in the tumba francesa. The most recognizable sound that the bongocero makes is the *bramido* or gliss. This is a howling or moaning sound produced by pushing one's fingertips across the drumhead and it is characteristic of the climax section of a changüí performance.

[22] Ibid., 277.

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Finally we move to a discussion of the vocals in changüí. The voice and the tres move in unison, as mentioned earlier. Below, I have included the lyrics for the song, *Así es el changüí*, underlining the stressed syllables.

En Cuba es tradicional,
las maracas y el bongó
Una guitarra hecho al tres,
el changüí es para bailar
Óiganlo bien eso es verdad
Con las maracas y el bongó,
el changüí es para gozar

Although "Spanish poetry is organized according to the number of syllables in the verse or line," vowels are treated differently in Spanish song and poetry than in plain text.[23] Weak vowels (i, u) form diphthongs, combining to form one syllable as do combinations of strong (a, e, o) and weak vowels. Furthermore, Philip Pasmanick writes that "rhyme occurs according to Afro-Cuban pronunciation, which, for example, ignores the word-final 's' and the word-final and intervocalic 'd' and interchanges word-final 'r' and 'l.'"[24] What follows is a literal application of these contraction rules with the stressed syllables underlined:

En Cu-bes tra-di-cio-nal,
las ma-ra-cas yel bon-gó
U-na gui-tar-rech-al tres,
el chan-güies pa-ra bai-lar
Ói-gan-lo bien e-soe ver-dad
Con las ma-ra-cael bon-gó,
el chan-güies pa-ra go-zar

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[23] George List, *Music and Poetry in a Colombian Village: A Tri-Cultural Heritage* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 191.
[24] Philip Pasmanick, "Décima and Rumba: Iberian Formalism in the Heart of Afro-Cuban Song," *Latin American Music Review* 18, no. 2 (1997): 252.

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What follows is the position of each syllable over the basic pulse with the dance steps (discussed below) indicated beneath the counts (R = right foot, L = left foot):[25]

							En
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
Cu-	baes		tra-		di-	cio-	nal
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
			las		ma-		ra-
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
	cas		yel		bon		gó
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
							En
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
Cu-	baes		tra-		di-	cio-	nal
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R

[25] The reader will notice there are two occasions where syllables are placed between density referants (smallest pulses); this is to indicate triplets.

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			las		ma-		ra-
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	.
		L				R	L
	cas		yel		bon		gó
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
							U-
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
na	gui	tar		hech	al		tres
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
			el		chan		güíes
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
	pa		ra		bai		lar
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
							U-
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L

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na	gui	tar		hech	al		tres
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
			el		chan		güíes
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
	pa		ra		bai		lar
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
							Oi-
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
---------------------------gan					lo		bien
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
							E-
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
---------------------------oes					ver		dad
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
							Oi-
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R

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-------------------------gan				lo			bien
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
							E-
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
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.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
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.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
las	ma	ra		cael	bon		gó
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L
			el		chan		güíes
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R
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		L				R	L
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		R				L	R
							Con
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1		2		3		4	
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las	ma	ra		cael	bon		gó
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R

			el		chan		güíes
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1		2		3		4	
		L				R	L

	pa		ra		go		zar
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1		2		3		4	
		R				L	R

At first glance, the text appears to be a heptasyllabic text (except for the fifth line) that maintains an offbeat stress even when set to music. Rules of Spanish versification indicate that this in fact an eight-syllable text with a truncated eighth syllable.[26] Earlier, it was noted that the guayo player or maraquero sings the lead solo voice and that both sing the main verse. The spatio-motor movement associated with playing the accompanying rhythmic patterns is repetitive and helps to indicate the stresses in the text. That is, the down strokes on the guayo and maracas coincide with stressed syllables. This is similar to what Tracey referred to as the dance upon the instrument:

Figure 1.1
Coordination of Text with Hand Movements

En Cubes tradicional

down with scraper

En Cubes tradicional

down with right hand

[26] List, 191-198.

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The lead singer's rhythm echoes and plays with the accompaniment, creating tension and release in what many scholars refer to as call and response. The first of these lead vocal improvisations is notated in the musical examples:

lead:	Ay yo quiero bailar
refrain:	Ay con el changüí
lead:	Vamos a guaracharlo
refrain:	Ay con el changüí
lead:	Mama llevame bailar
refrain:	Ay con el changüí
lead:	Yo me quiero divertir
refrain:	Ay con el changüí
lead:	Ye, Ye, Ye
refrain:	Ay con el changüí
lead:	Vamos a bailar
refrain:	Ay con el changüí…

As noted above, the tres is the guide for the singers and the accompanying instruments, because once tres initiates the llamada de montuno the other instruments know exactly when and how to enter with their parts. Thus, it acts as the one part that organizes all others. However, the dancers follow the bongó or the marímbula. Before moving to the dance, readers are encouraged to listen to the recording and follow the transcription in order to see and hear how all of the parts line up.

Dance

Musicians use dance styles as a means of distinguishing one genre from one another. The changüí song, *Mi changüí es un tizón*, describes dancers debating how one should dance to changüí, "En un salón que tocaban, bailadores discutaban como bailar este changüí que no sea son" (In a hall where they were plying [music], dancers were arguing how to dance to this changüí that isn't *son*).

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Watching people dance to changüí can be disconcerting for someone whose reference point is son or salsa. It may appear as if the dancers are out of sync with the ensemble, but such is not the case. The dance steps follow the marímbula or bongó because the main shift in body weight occurs on the last beat of each measure, like the main accents in the marímbula and bongó patterns. In contrast to son, changüí is danced flat footed rather than on the ball of the foot. The dance follows this rhythm: the right foot begins, but the steps are short and the foot is not lifted until the last step; there is little waist and hip movement and turns are executed with the hands below shoulder level. In contrast, when dancing son the right foot begins, then the left follows and the weight of the body is shifted to the foot that began the sequence; turns are executed with hands above the head.

On December 21, 1998, Pedro Castillo Lescaille a.k.a. "Panchín" and Evelia Noblet Colás a.k.a. "Bella," the dance couple for Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo shared their views on changüí dance. Panchín explained, "I dance with the bongó."[27] A few days earlier, the bongocero for Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, Andrés Fistó Cobas a.k.a. "Taveras," explained to me that, "when the dancer is dancing . . . you [the bongocero] are obligated to play certain licks."[28] He further explained that the dancer often coordinates his movements with the bongó, but not in the same way as when

[27] Evelia "Bella" Noblet Colás, Pedro Castillo Lescaille "Pachín," Antonio "Ñico Ya" Cisneros Arnaud, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 21 December 1998: "Yo bailo con el bongó."
[28] Andrés "Taveras" Fistó Cobas, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 17 December 1998.

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dancing rumba. Taveras said that he coordinates some of his bongó licks with the male dancer's steps and, "if it's not done with the foot . . . [then] with the body."[29]

Bella explained that in her youth men would ask a woman to dance by saying, "Dame un cedazo" (Give me a dance); when she acquiesced, the woman would place a handkerchief in her hand when dancing with the man.[30] Reflecting on the difference between how dancers danced to changüí in her youth and at present, Bella explained that, "before, people danced more stiffly [*trancado*].[31]" For Bella, when compared to son, "changüí is more rhythmic [*cadencioso*]"; for Panchín, "changüí is similar to son and different . . . changüí is faster.[32]"

The absence of the clave, as a timeline and overarching organizing principle, demonstrates that musicians and dancers have been able to utilize heavy syncopation by internalizing the basic pulse. The musical structure doesn't collapse, but participatory discrepancies allow for variations in swing and syncopation from group to group and amongst players of the same instrument. The overall swing that is created by the interlocking of the instrumental parts is what really guides changüí dancers.

Changüí is a couple dance; the only people who dance individually are the performing musicians. As in most Latin American couple dances, when the male dancer moves with his right foot, the female dancer moves with her left foot. The basic step for changüí consists of three movements. The first two are quick, and the weight of the body is shifted to one leg on the third step. This is also considered as dancing contratiempo.

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[29] Ibid.
[30] Evelia "Bella" Noblet Colás, Pedro Castillo Lescaille "Pachín," interview.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

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In trying to notate changüí dance steps, I reviewed some of the existing literature on Afro-Caribbean and Latin American dance. Scholars such as Celeste Fraser Delgado and José Esteban Muñoz concede that it is impossible to capture Afro-Caribbean dance with classical dance notation.[33] Yvonne Daniel applied such an approach to the dances of the Cuban rumba complex, but the notations are difficult to understand.[34] In his three-volume work on Colombian dance and music, José Portaccio Fontalvo uses Alberto Londoño's notational system to show the overall movement of the dancers during the piece.[35] Fradique Lizardo adds multiple drawings to these larger gestures as well as foot patterns in his book on Dominican folklore.[36] However, neither Portaccio Fontalvo nor Lizardo have solved the problem of how to notate these movements and make them correspond to the music in real time. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to devise such a system. Therefore, I will follow the conventions of scholars such as Barbara Browning and George Kakoma and indicate the footwork in musical notation.[37] In the musical examples and in the above explanation of the versification, I have added the foot positions underneath the lyrics to indicate "culturally understood" bodily movements.

Because of the musical pauses between repeated lines of text, the repetitions of each line will put the opposite footsteps (R-L rather than L-R) in the pertinent syllabic

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[33] Celeste Fraser Delgado and José Esteban Muñoz, eds., *Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 13.
[34] Yvonne Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 152-166.
[35] José Portaccio Fontalvo, *Colombia y su música, vol. 2: canciones y fiestas de la region andina* (Santa Fe de Bogotá: s.n., 1995).
[36] Fradique Lizardo, *Danzas y bailes folklóricos dominicanos* (Santo Domingo: Fundación García-Arevalo, 1974).
[37] Barbara Browning, *Samba: Resistance in Motion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). George Kakoma, *Songs from Buganda* (London: University of London Press, 1969).

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positions. As noted earlier, the dance steps follow the marímbula or bongó because the main shift in body weight occurs on the last beat of a measure, like the main accents in the marímbula (beat four) and bongó (upbeats) patterns.

Learning to Play Changüí and the Importance of Personal Style

Many changüiseros explained to me that their interest in changüí was cultivated during childhood. Taveras said, "From an early age . . . I inclined myself toward changüí.[38]' Similarly, Pepin explained that, "[as a boy] wherever the musicians were, I followed."[39] In Racífo Durán's case, his father began bringing him to the fiestas at the age of twelve.

As Marcelino Ruiz (and others) pointed out to me, "There are people who learned how to play the tres without anyone teaching them or without watching someone else."[40] Taveras explained that, "every tresero has his own style, his own form . . . [similarly] everyone who played marímbula didn't play the same."[41] Taveras described a marímbula player that he remembered seeing. This musician had a very long key for his lowest note. When the music got hot, he would pull the key from the bottom, producing a loud banging sound and shout to scare the dancers. Perhaps these descriptions of individuality and independent learning confirm the extent to which many of changüí's conventions have been folklorized and/or recently established in the last fifty years. It seems that

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[38] Andrés "Taveras" Fistó Cobas, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 17 December 1998.
[39] José "Pepin" Díaz Planes and Rácifo Durán Durruthy, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 11 August 1999.
[40] Marcelino Ruiz, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 17 August 1999. "Hay gente que ha aprendido a tocar el tres solo sin nadie enseñando o mirando a otro"

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most aspiring treseros do learn by watching older musicians. Bule always seems to be coaching a few budding treseros at his house, and I have seen and heard reports of other established musicians tutoring less-experienced musicians. A few members of the all-female group, La Guantanamera, had studied with the members of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. In addition to verbal confirmation of this fact by La Guantanamera's group-members, their tres, bongó, and marímbula licks bore an obvious influence from Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo.

According to Taveras, the best players would traditionally start playing at a party, when they took a break they would give their instrument to a less talented musician; the next player would play differently to distinguish her/himself but other factors were involved. A new tresero who was used to a different tuning "had to ask the owner of the tres for permission to change the instrument's tuning."[42] This type of situation seems to indicate another way in which individuality and uniqueness of self-expression were and continue to be prized.

Changüí Performance Practice

In his discussion of West African music, Chernoff writes about "*tension in time...* [which] is built into the *formal organization* of the different parts of the ensemble."[43] To review, in changüí the parts that most instruments play in the ensemble are predetermined and constant. This is not to say that the music and the parts are without any variation, but

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[41] Andrés "Taveras" Fistó Cobas, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 17 December 1998.
[42] Ibid.: "Tenía que pedirle permiso al dueño del tres para cambiar la afinación que tiene."

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it is helpful to invoke Chernoff yet again in saying that "the music is perhaps best considered as an arrangement of gaps where one may add a rhythm, rather than as a dense pattern of sound."[44] The maracas and guayo parts never change. The marímbula part can change during the climax of the piece, but the variations always occur in predetermined sections. The tres always plays in unison with the voice and is an excellent example of Chernoff's notion of 'offbeat aesthetics' or what the Cubans call *síncopa*, syncopation.[45]

The structure of a changüí performance is similar to the two-part canto-montuno form of rumba and son. In current practice, rumberos, soneros, and changüiseros add sections to elaborate on this basic form. Traditional rumba begins with the *diana* (an introductory wordless-vocal melody), continues with the *guía* (lead voice and melody), reaches its climax in the *montuno* (refrain) and vocal improvisations, a brief drum solo follows, and the piece concludes with a repetition of the montuno and vocal improvisations. Similarly, traditional sones begin with a verse (sometimes repeated twice), move to a montuno with vocal improvisations, continue with an instrumental improvisation, and return to the montuno. Since the 1940s, *mambos* (pre-composed horn riffs) and *moñas* (improvised horn riffs) appear before and after solos and montunos.

A typical changüí performance would follow these six steps:

1) *Llamada de montuno* (call of the mountain) - initiated by tres

2) *Ejecución colectiva* (collective entrance) of bongo, marímbula, maracas, guayo. This is not found in early changüí, which is performed by tres, bokú and guayo.

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[43] John Miller Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 95.
[44] Ibid., 113.

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3) *Canto changüisero* (main body of changüí song)

4) Montuno with vocal improvisations

5) *Descarga* (improvisation) between tres and bongo; optional in early changüí.

6) Return to montuno with vocal improvisations; *Climax de despedida* (climax and decrescendo)

In order to demonstrate these 'steps' a transcription and a timeline have been made for the song *Así es el changüí* on Corazon Records CORA121, track 5:

Table 1.2
Timetable for *Así es el changüí*

Time	Action
0:00	llamada de montuno is played twice
0:07	entrance of marímbula, bongó, guayo and maracas
0:08	tres plays entire canto changüisero like a vocalist
0:38	singers sing the canto changüisero
1:17	llamada de montuno is played twice
1:20	vocal improvisation begins on second half of second llamada de montuno
2:14	tres solo; bongó plays ride pattern
3:01	llamada de montuno is played again
3:05	climax: bongó more active with vocal improvisations and choral refrain
3:26	decrescendo: bongó returns to ride pattern with *bramido* (gliss)

[45] Ibid., 98.

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Three Stages in the Historical Development of Changüí Performance

Folkloric presentations such as those by El Septeto Típico de Guantánamo, now Los Universales del Son, present changüí in three stages of development. Ramón Gómez is the first person I encountered who used these terms with regularity, but identifying performance styles is a concept generally accepted and practiced by musicians. Other musicians make similar yet less academic distinctions between types of changüí, often noting a song's age or its composer. They also identify stylistic variations within the counties of the province e.g. Yateras, Baracoa, etc. The musical characteristics, which distinguish early, traditional, and contemporary changüí performance styles, are explained below.

Ramón Gómez Blanco and other musicians refer to these as *primario* (early), *tradicional*, and *contemporaneo* (contemporary changüí). In early changüí, the ensemble consists of tres, bokú, and guayo. Traditionally, the tres player would sing the guía (lead voice). In general, when a tres player sings the lead vocal part in a changüí ensemble it is considered an 'archaic' form. While there must be other groups still using this format, I have only seen one, Grupo Changüí 17 de Mayo from the El Salvador municipality.

Examples of changüí primario are songs such as *Tiene que trabajar pa' tu mujer* and *La rumba de Mosqueda*.[46] Typically these songs lie nicely on the fingerboard of the tres although they are lyrically complex. Melodically they are usually in diatonic major and minor keys not deviating from tonic and dominant chords. These songs are played in both the early and traditional formats, but are thought to be representative of the older

[46] Chapter 6 discusses the lyrics and historical significance of these and other changüí songs.

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style of changüí songs written and played by the legendary treseros of the past, such as Mosqueda, Masó, etc.

The traditional changüí ensemble consists of tres, bongos, botíja or botijuela, guayo, and maracas. In traditional changüí the lead vocalist plays maracas or guayo. Examples of traditional changüí songs are *Zoima* and *El guararey de Pastora*. Changüí tradicional is always characterized by the *ejecución colectiva*

Contemporary changüí does not always begin with the llamada de montuno and ejecución colectiva. Some contemporary changüí songs have elaborate beginnings featuring each instrument unaccompanied, and others have complex melodic/rhythmic endings called *cierres* (closings). During the 2000 changüí songwriting competition many marímbula players played an unaccompanied timba breakdown figure during the climax of a song's performance (see Example 1.2).[47] Contemporary changüí songs are wordier, and contemporary performance seems to be including more improvisation with *coplas* and *décimas*.

Conclusion: Syncopation and Spatio-Motor Movement in Changüí

Like all musical genres, changüí provides a framework for coordinating specific actions. These actions are organized hierarchically from the guayo to the dancers. There is room for improvisation, but it must remain within the syncopated aesthetic. Musicians hoping to perform the genre must be aware at all times of the other parts, because no one instrument functions as an organizing time line. This means that the tres must listen to the maracas, guayo, and marímbula and make sure not to get *montado* (carried away) and

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push the offbeats too far ahead of the common pulse. The marímbula helps to solidify the time with strokes on the face of the instrument characterized as carrying or lifting the time. Both vocals and bodily movements are visibly linked to instrumental playing techniques and musical patterns.

While the guayo and maracas provide heavy downbeats, they do not provide the rhythmic foundation of the style, as it is the tres that initiates every song. Changüí is a genre that exploits highly syncopated musical ideas and movements, but if confused, one need only remember the lyric for the song: *Como se toca se baila, como se baila se toca* (It is danced as it's played, it is played as it's danced).

[47] Timba refers to the modern style of Cuban dance-band music; one of its features is the use of breakdown figures, which may be inspired by North American funk music.

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Musical Example 1.1
Full Changüí Ensemble

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Chapter 2: Styles of Tres Improvisation

As noted earlier, the tres figures centrally in changüí, to a greater extent than in other Cuban genres. For that reason, this chapter focuses on the improvisational styles and techniques of 'Yu,' Julian Valier, and Reyes 'Chito' Latamblé, three important treseros, based in different localities, whose playing best exemplifies three different styles.[1] Within the province of Guantánamo there are ten *municipios* (counties): El Salvador, Guantánamo, Yateras, Baracoa, Maisí, Imías, San Antonio del Sur, Manuel Tames, Caimanera, and Niceto Pérez. Yu plays in a number of groups in Yateras, a rural and mountainous municipio located to the north and east of the city and county of Guantánamo that is considered the crucible of rural, acoustically performed changüí. His contemporary, Julian Valier was born and raised in Yateras, later moving to the city of Guantánamo in mid-life. Valier performed with an electrified instrument in urban settings, but considered his playing as exemplary of Yateras. Chito Latamblé was born and raised in La Loma del Chivo, a neighborhood of immigrants and changüiseros in the heart of the city of Guantánamo. These three individual styles are presented and compared with the purpose of describing common features of tres improvisation of the changüí genre found in rural and urban settings. The Latamblé and 'Yu' transcriptions were made from commercial recordings while Julian Valier's solo is taken from a non-commercial audio recording.

[1] Other important treseros and treseras from Guantánamo include, María Guevara, Pedro Masó, Juan Logát, Julio Nuñez, Mosqueda, Corales, Herminio García "El Diablo" Wilson, Tuntún Gainsa (female), Raúl Carpe, Juan Glot, Cecilia la Baracoensa, Primitivo Pons a.k.a. Cuatro Filos (four knife edges), Rácifo Duran, Nino Mendoza, Pedro Vera, Guillermo "Bule" Mustelier, Carmelo Irve Suteran, Geovannis, Ovidio Morales, Dutíl, and Marcelino Ruiz, among others.

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As previously mentioned, I took tres lessons with Guillermo "Bule" Mustelier in 1997. Our daily lessons began at nine in the morning and lasted about two to three hours; I taped each lesson on cassette. We began in the morning by working on a particular changüí or son melody. This always entailed learning the lyrics and singing along with what was being played on the tres. Some sones we studied were "Suavecito" by Ignacio Piñero and "La rosa oriental" by Miguel Matamoros, as well as songs from the traditional changüí repertoire such as "Zoima," "Pastorita," and "Tiene que trabajar pa' tu mujer" (to be discussed in Chapter 4); kiribá and nengón rounded out the lesson material. After a good two hours, around 11:00am, we would take a break and enjoy a cold beer or *malta* (a type of soft drink) with some good conversation. In the second half of the lesson we would work on another song or I would learn Bule's particular framework for improvising over the song in question. This framework consisted of expositions of different fingerboard positions, modulations, and rhythmic tricks that worked particularly well. When I least expected it, Bule would play a very simple lick with a difficult fingering and ask me to attempt it. In these moments I learned that the tres really has many fingering tricks that create auditory illusions, or as Bule would say "el tres tiene muchos trucos."

Although all transcriptions are subjective, transcribing tres solos from an audiorecording is especially so, regardless of recording quality. One of the distinctive features of the tres' sound comes from the ambiguities resulting from the doubled octave on the first and third courses. Octave doublings are also present on certain instruments such as the Puerto Rican cuatro (bB-eE-aA-dd-gg), the Cuban cuatro (dd-gG-cc-Ee—among others), and the twelve-string guitar (eE-aA-dD-gg-bb-ee). In playing the twelve-

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string guitar and the Puerto Rican cuatro, the guitarist and cuatrista continues to think of these octave doublings in terms of their customary (six string) octave configurations, and listeners are expected to hear accordingly. In contrast, on the tres, with only three courses— two of which are doubled at the octave— the octave ambiguity is more prominently heard, both in melodies and arpeggios. Unlike the Puerto Rican cuatro and the twelve-string guitar, the tuning of the tres (gG-cc-Ee) allows the player to give the illusion of infinite range, because the same note or pair of notes can be played in multiple positions throughout the fingerboard; most treseros exploit this characteristic.[2]

Looking at the montuno for *El guararey de Pastora* illustrates this point quite well. My experiences in lessons, jam sessions, and informal conversations with musicians indicate that the song is commonly played in the key of Eb Major centered on the third fret (see Musical Example 2.1). Looking at the excerpt and its tablature, one sees that the sequence cc-a*b*A*b*-dd-b*b*B*b*-e*b*e*b* is intended to be heard as an ascending passage and that the doubling of the octave is not important. In certain situations the player intends for the tres' octave doubling to be perceived, particularly during improvisation; Musical Example 2.2 illustrates this point. This is a diminished arpeggio played in one position, but the octave ambiguity allows the musician to create the illusion that this arpeggio keeps moving higher in range: b*b*B*b*-d*b*D*b*-ee-Gg-B*b*b*b*-d*b*D*b*-ee-B*b*b*b*-d*b*D*b*-ee-Gg-B*b*b*b*-d*b*D*b*. I use this ambiguity in my own recordings, particularly

[2] Tres players are always developing and swapping passages that are clever and crafty--much like jazz musicians exchanging classic licks. Older musicians have many of these *trucos* (tricks) in their repertoire of licks.

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when I want to construct long melodic lines that include chromaticisms between chord tones.

In light of the instrument's inherent ambiguities, at times it can be difficult to notate definitive fingerings in a transcription, and it is possible for the listener to hear a melodic contour that is not really present, as in the case of the diminished arpeggio. At other times it is quite clear the octave ambiguity is irrelevant to stepwise motion. Octaves can be hard to distinguish in situations when a tres' sound is distorted due to excessive gain and amplification; the playing of Papi Oviedo, Arsenio Rodríguez and Niño Rivera's often falls into this category.

Sometimes, when multiple instruments are heard in the background while a tresero is improvising, it is difficult to determine if one is hearing a unison or an octave. The higher octave is usually more audible than the lower octave on low fidelity recordings. This is the case with changüí recordings particularly, because there is a density of musical activity that at times covers up the differences between string vibrations characteristic of a unison and those of an octave. When the tapes were slowed down during the transcription process, there were a few moments where the marímbula coincided rhythmically with the tres; the marímbula's pitch and sound quality were timbrally quite close to the tres' two octave-courses thus adding to perceptual confusion.

Interestingly, when writing for the tres, Cuban musicians only notate one pitch per course, regardless of genre. Changüiseros who have given me music never indicate which course to play, or if a given pitch is a unison or an octave. Perhaps this lack of course specificity is meant to give the player a certain degree of agency; the stepwise melodic motion common to most changüí songs can be played in a variety of positions.

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Prescriptive instructional materials used in Cuban conservatories also follow this non-course specific system, sometimes indicating the course and fingering, but never notating octaves and unisons. Cuban method books such as *Escuela del tres cubano, primera parte* (1988) cover western classical music, son, and many other genres without mentioning this issue.[3] *El recurso del tres: método para treseros* (1998), a Dominican method book for the tres written by Tommy García, does not even make mention of the octave doublings in its grid-style tablature—almost implying that each string is doubled as a unison.[4] Similarly, J. Emanuel Dufrasne-Gonzalez' essay on the tres in Puerto Rico points out that local tunings vary, but he does not account for octave doublings in his chord charts or notations.[5] Descriptive Cuban musicological writings on the tres, such as *Instrumentos de la música folclórico-popular de Cuba* (1997), do not transcribe the octave doublings nor do they indicate fingerings; the examples in these texts are transcriptions of recorded performances.[6] Cuban musicians do affirm that treseros only have one course with an octave (gG-cc-ee) when playing punto guajiro or other types of música campesina. This is to imitate the sonority of the *laúd*, a small 12 or 18-stringed instrument traditionally tuned c#c#-f#f#-bb-ee-aa-dd, and to facilitate the rapid finger movement characteristic of música campesina genres.

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[3] Efraín Amador Piñero and Doris Oropesa Saavedra, *Escuela del tres cubano, primera parte* (La Habana: Editora Musical de Cuba, 1988).
[4] Tommy García, *El recurso del tres: método para treseros. Cuadernos de folklore no. 2* (Consejo Presidencial de Cultura. Instituto Dominicano de Folklore; Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa y Omega, 1998), 39-77.
[5] J. Emanuel Dufrasne-Gonzalez, "El tres cubano en Puerto Rico: algunos datos," in *Puerto Rico también tiene...¡tambó!* (Río Grande, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Leró, 1994), 49-63.
[6] Carmen María Sáenz Coopat, "Tres," *Instrumentos de la música popular-popular de Cuba* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1997), 474-475.

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In light of this information, I have indicated one subjective fingering for each solo based on my familiarity with each musician's instrument, video footage of the musicians playing other solos, intonation, and the logic of the fingerboard. The last of these four aspects is also highly subjective, but because changüí tres solos are based on sequences of arpeggios— as opposed to the stepwise melodic motion more common to son, punto guajiro, and Puerto Rican *música jíbara* (peasant music)— I have made specific fingering decisions based on my understanding of the musical practices associated with changüí tres players. In the recordings there are some instances where an open string will ring for a few seconds and the next note is played at a high fret position. At other times the poor or clear quality of a given note's intonation strongly suggests a particular position or fingering. My transcriptions follow what I hear on these recordings and what I perceive to be the most logical fingerings for what I am hearing; other possible fingerings are indicated by parentheses. Ultimately, video recording a tres player would be the only way to make a certain transcription of the absolute pitches played and exactly where they were executed on the instrument's fingerboard. Finally, the solos are transcribed as they sound, and are not to be read an octave up or down when being played.

Many changüiseros have distinguished themselves as vocal improvisers and treseros. The legendary figures of Pedro Masó, Julio Nuñez, Juan Logat, and Mosqueda were known to improvise melodies that they sang and played simultaneously; Chapter 6 discusses some of their songs and associated stories. Their improvisations and compositions are sung and performed to this day. For many possible reasons, in the last 50 years fewer and fewer treseros have sung *guía* (lead voice that improvises) while playing tres. In fact, today there are few treseros who sing the lead vocal part in a group,

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a practice more indicative of an older, rural style of changüí.[7] As discussed in Chapter 2, scholars such as Ramón Gómez Blanco see this as characteristic of the first of three stages in the historical development of changüí.

Through lessons, transcriptions of solos, attendance at many formal and informal performances, and performing with local changüiseros, I have concluded that the following attributes of a tres player in changüí appear to be constant: solid right hand picking technique, rhythmic complexity, a sophisticated sense of *síncopa* and *contratiempo*, thorough knowledge of the entire fingerboard (for solo improvisation), and the ability to repeat musical ideas in sequences. Because the tres and the voice are always in unison except when the tres is soloing, the tres player is obligated to return to the montuno to signal the end of his or her solo, and each of the treseros discussed below does just that. When improvising, changüí treseros play few single-note melodic lines and few chords. Flashy displays of technique characteristic of the laúd, the Puerto Rican cuatro, and the son tres are rhythmically unsuccessful in changüí. Instead, players vary the texture with unique picking techniques, voicings, and range. In general, the changüí tres style is typically *tradicional* (traditional).

Yu: *Estrella Campesina*

Historically, the rural municipios surrounding the municipio of Guantánamo, such as Salvador, Manuel Tames, and Niceto Pérez were and continue to be places associated with rural changüí, and many great changüiseros and treseros have hailed from villages

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[7] One changüí group where the tres player sings lead vocals is *Grupo Changüí 17 Mayo* from the Niceto Pérez municipality.

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such as Las Sidras and Guayacan. However, the municipio of Yateras holds the title of *cuna de changüí* (cradle of changüí), having a longstanding reputation of being home to many changüiseros and fine treseros, such as Rogelio del Monte, Yu, Ovidio Morales, Dutíl, and many others.

Located to the north and east of the city of Guantánamo, Yateras is well known for its coffee and unique zoo made of stonecarved animals.[8] Citrus fruits and forestry complete the local economy of this mountainous municipality. For many changüiseros in the city of Guantánamo, Yateras represents the prime source of changüí-- as many blues musicians regard the Mississippi Delta as the prime source of blues-- Yateras' status as the homeland of changüí is continually extolled in many changüí songs by Yateranos and Guantánamo citydwellers.

While I have not had the opportunity to formally interview 'Yu,' I have seen him perform on all of my visits to Guantánamo.[9] As the former tresero for Estrellas Campesinas (Country Peasant Stars) and other groups in Yateras, his playing epitomizes the traditional Yateras tres style.

Despite the fact that Yateras looms large in the lore of changüí and that European tourists are frequently brought there to attend "authentic" changüí parties, the Cuban musical bureaucracy classifies Estrellas Campesinas as a group of *aficionados* (amateurs). They do not earn salaries as professional musicians; however, they perform for tourists and at local events. Furthermore, recordings of performances by Estrellas Campesinas

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[8] Elio Revé and others, have recorded songs about picking coffee in Yateras. For more on this see Chapter 7.
[9] Yu like Cambrón is an *apodo* (nickname); players and public refer to one another by nickname.

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have appeared on numerous compilations in Cuba and around the world as examples of traditional changüí. Clearly, the quality of the group's performance is professional, yet for reasons unknown they are not paid as professionals.[10]

This solo is taken from the CD, *Changüí*, Traditional Crossroad CD4290, recorded in 1989. The song is Roberto Bautá Segarra's classic composition, *El guararey de Pastora*. Although most treseros in Guantánamo play this piece in Eb-Major, at the third fret, it is transcribed as it sounds in the recording, in F-Major (see Musical Example 2.3).

1) Right-hand Technique

Yu performs acoustically, without an electromagnetic pickup in his instrument, a marker of traditional style to some locals. At competitions and other staged performances, he stands in front of a microphone, playing forcefully. His instrument is usually capoed at the second fret and tuned lower, evidently to preserve the strings.[11] It appears that the years of playing in the rural environment have helped to give him a large sound. As far as right-hand technique is concerned, video footage shows that he picks from top to bottom. There is no pronounced *doblando* (tremolo picking), but the listener hears several instances where two or more notes are struck simultaneously. These clusters are similar to those heard in Julian Valier's playing, and they help indicate the player's position on the fingerboard when transcribing the improvisation.

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[10] Dita Sullivan and many others have commented on this fact. For more on the Cuban state musical bureaucracy's classification of musical groups see James Robbins, "Making Popular Music in Cuba: A Study of the Cuban Institutions of Musical Production and the Musical Life of Santiago de Cuba" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1990).
[11] Tres strings break easily and are difficult to obtain. One common solution to avoid breaking strings is to tune the instrument lower and use a capo.

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2) Harmonic Concept

Popular sentiment, as articulated by Ramón Gómez Blanco and other scholars and musicians, is that chromaticism is absent from traditional changüí *descargas* (improvisations). Musical practices from *el monte* (the mountains) are upheld as most traditional, but our friend, Yu, uses three non-diatonic notes, F#, C# and B, in this solo. These pitches function as leading tones (F# to G, C# to D and B to C) and are necessarily employed when improvising melodies on the harmonic progression I-vi-ii-V-I. And it is currently a common practice to play these harmonic cycles during the course of a tres *descarga*.[12] Thus, it seems that from a harmonic standpoint, Yu is not thinking outside of the key of F and is still thinking diatonically.

This solo begins with a simple two-bar motive that is extended and changed when it is repeated. Here, we see and hear how the F# in measure 9 is used as a leading tone to G in the aforementioned harmonic-melodic progression, while simultaneously moving up and down the fingerboard, so that the center of activity has moved from frets 2-5 to frets 5-8. The same move from F# to G-natural (measure 9) is repeated in measure 13. In measures 15-16, Yu is at the highest point on the fingerboard, exploiting the timbral and registral qualities peculiar to the tres. Here I am referring to the sounding of F on the tenth fret of the bottom (gG) course followed immediately by the C played on the middle (cc) course. This is not an easy string/fingering combination to pull off in real time, and it shows his intimate knowledge of the instrument's fingerboard. Measures 17-24 bring

[12] The current tresero in Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, Carmelo Irve Suteran, plays this progression in most of solos, perhaps as a way of referencing his predecessor, Chito Latamblé. Examples of his playing can be heard on Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, *Bongó de monte*, EGREM CD 0356 (2000).

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the center of activity back to the bottom of the instrument. In measure 24, C# is used as a leading tone to D-Natural in order to get back to F Major from G minor.

3) Rhythmic Concept

Yu's concept of síncopa is even. As far as I can tell, there are very few moments where the playing is ahead or behind the basic pulse. This sense of evenness is underscored by the bongocero, who plays closer to the steady accompaniment style of son than to the usual style of changüí. Measures 13 and 14 show Yu's use of anticipation. Another technique is playing three consecutive eighth notes. This is seen at the end of measure 11 going into measure 12 and repeated in measures 18-19, 23, and 25-26. This appears to be a rhythmic referencing of the same figure (C-F-E) from the song's main theme or montuno.

Is this solo exemplary of traditional '*monte*' style? Yes. Most locals would agree that it is the real deal, because of the acoustic performance, note choice, and use of familiar cycles. We will see in subsequent chapters exactly how, when, and where the notion of tradition is expressed and referenced by changüiseros and Guantanameros. Nevertheless, it is easy to see why we are in the presence of a master when we consider Yu's combination of motivic development, rhythmic variation, nice harmonic sensibility, and wide range of movement on the fingerboard.

Julian Valier: "¡Respétame mi tocar y no me pongas a criticar, Panchín!"[13]

Julian Valier (b. January 27, 1928 – d. 2000) was also born and raised in Yateras. Although he lived in the city of Guantánamo, Julian Valier was proud to be a *yaterano*

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(from Yateras). And when asked to distinguish between the style of tres playing and changüí practiced in Yateras and that of the city of Guantánamo, he said that his playing was exemplary of the Yateras style.[14]

Julian learned to play the tres from his father, Lorenzo Valier. Many of his cousins were also treseros. He formed the group Los Seguidores de Changüí (The Followers of Changüí) with his first cousin, Julio Valier, an excellent singer. The name of the group is significant because it implies that the musicians were making a conscious decision to follow changüí, almost like a religious conversion. The group performed regularly at changüí parties and to this day performs the second Saturday of each month at the *Sociedad de los cinco blancos* (literally, 'the society of five whites'), a domino-playing club located at Calle 5 between Pedro A. Perez and Calixto García. Los Seguidores de Changüí are a unique group, because they are dedicated to performing old songs written by Pedro Masó, Primitivo Pons a.k.a. Cuatros Filos, as well as known, contemporary pieces. Julio Valier affirms that the group does not play any musical genre other than changüí and that they do not mix genres.[15] Most interesting are Julian Valier's own songs, which talk of competition between musicians and amorous relationships, among other themes. Prior to his death, Julian Valier also performed with Los Morenos de Changüí, a group that will be discussed later in the context of the changüí competitions. The members of this group were some forty years younger than Julian, and

[13] "Respect my playing and don't criticize me, Panchín!"
[14] José "Nino" Olivares Pérez, Antonio "Ñico Ya" Cisneros Arnaud, Julian Valier, and Carlos "Cambrón" Borromeo Planche, video recording. Guantánamo, Cuba, 20 December 1998.
[15] Julio Valier, interview by author, tape recording, Guantánamo, Cuba, 8 December 2000.

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several of them commented positively on how much they learned from his vast experience playing at changüí parties and events in Yateras and Guantánamo.[16]

The following song is taken from a tape of Los Seguidores de Changüí that was given to me by Julio Valier.[17] I had heard some of the tape in Julian Valier's house in December 1998. This tape is not commercially available and was recorded sometime around 1998. Some selections are taken from live performances and others sound like they were recorded in the living room of a bandmember's house.

This solo is taken from one of Valier's own songs, *Respétame mi tocar* (respect my playing). The tape contains two renditions of this song; the solo I have transcribed is on side two. The song was written in response to Panchín, a tresero who resides or resided in the mountains above Yateras. As Julio Valier explained to me, Panchín criticized Julian's playing but he was afraid to go head to head with him in a cutting contest. As seen in Chapter 6, the lyrics of the song express Julian Valier's view of the rivalry quite clearly, as well as his "come test me" attitude.[18] The song is transcribed in the key of A Major (see Musical Example 2.4).

1) Rhythmic and Harmonic Complexity

Valier's unique concept of syncopation and upbeats is heard clearly in this recording. Listeners who are unfamiliar with the notions of síncopa and contratiempo

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[16] Ernesto Llelywn and Ariel Daudinot Brooks, conversation with author, Guantánamo, Cuba, December 2000.

[17] Julio Valier suggested that other treseros in Guantánamo, such as Carmelo Irve, had studied this tape to master the changüí idiom.

[18] Julian was a prolific composer and his better known compositions include *Respétame mi tocar*, *La mora*, and *No llores*, among others which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

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often comment that they find his sense of pulse to be off, or way ahead of the beat. This could be true when comparing Julian's playing to Yu's or Chito's playing. However, it is incorrect, because Valier's bursts of "pushing ahead" of the beat are completely controlled and he places his offbeats evenly, on top of the beat, when he isn't soloing. I submit that he uses this rhythmic tension to excite his fellow musicians, dancers, and listeners, but more importantly to also show his musical teeth—that is, to let other treseros know that they should stay on their toes. Valier also plays his *pasos de calle* in this fashion, playing two arpeggiations in the same space where one is usually played or throwing in a few extra notes.

In the first two measures of the solo (mm14-15), Valier begins his improvisation with a simple motive that is compacted and immediately reshaped in measure 16. He then begins an impressive display of rhythmic displacement and modulation beginning in measures 17-23, by alternating between a B-minor and an A-Major triad. During this section, Valier plays two notes simultaneously such as B and D. This is common in Yu's improvisational style but something Latamblé rarely plays in his recorded solos. Like Latamblé, Julian Valier also employs frequent shifts between tonalities, easily seen in measures 17-23 and measures 32-37.

In measures 24-37, Valier continues to alternate between A Major and B minor, choosing notes and fingerings that produce unique combinations of intervals. Valier exploits such intervals as the minor second and tritone. Measure 34 is a good example of an A Major 6 chord, voiced F#-C#-E while the F#-G#-D in measure 32 is actually a B half-diminished chord.

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After exploring the options of this two-chord sequence, Valier reestablishes A-Major in measure 38, moving further up the neck of the instrument where he begins the montuno from *El guararey de Pastora* in measure 39. Right away, he spices up the pattern with some fast picking of three consecutive eighth notes, as seen in measures 40, 42-44. In measure 45, Valier begins his descent down the fingerboard with a simple yet brilliant motive based on thirds. This lasts for four measures and gives him an excellent opportunity to make a transition back to the montuno in measure 49.

2) Right-hand Technique

While audible, although not marked in the transcription, Valier seems to have played practically everything with the *doblando* (tremolo) type of attack, including slower-tempo genres, such as *nengón*. This particular attack is the marker of an older style of playing and is rarely used by younger players. The ease with which he picks open and fretted strings belies the difficulty with which such moves are executed at fast tempos.

3) Knowledge of the Fingerboard

Valier thoroughly knows the fingerboard and he, too, moves up and down the neck in the same fashion as Latamblé. This solo spans a distance of 9 frets. However, unlike Yu and Latamblé, Valier tends to remain in one position for a considerable amount of time, exploring many tonal options before moving up or down. It seems that Julian always has some tricks up his sleeve and can get in and out of any position with musicality and ease, particularly evidenced by the simple thirds pattern in measures 45-48. He reacted well to the other musicians in the group and to the audience. One can say that he always had something else to pull out and that he never got trapped. Perhaps his

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mastery and brilliance stemmed from his love for the vibrant tradition of competition inherent to the genre.

When I first met Julian Valier in 1998, he patiently answered my questions, but he quickly demanded that I play for him and prove myself as a tresero. Once I had gained his approval, we jammed for nearly two hours on Nino Olivares' porch, taking turns improvising and accompanying one another. He showed me his instruments and expressed his preference for those with larger bodies. He was a connoisseur of sound and tone, which led him to experiment with string combinations. One of his instruments was made from a German 12-string guitar that was strung with seven strings: the second course had three strings. Julian Valier was a changüisero's changüisero whose playing was highly respected. His love for playing changüí is audible in every note he played.

Chito Latamblé: ¡*Tresero mayor*!

Reyes "Chito" Latamblé (1916 – March 6, 1993) was considered by musicians and locals to be the *tresero mayor* (best tresero) of Guantánamo. He received many awards during his lifetime from the Cuban government (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

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Figure 2.1
Bas-relief of Latamblé at his house in San Justo. The text reads "Eterno homenaje a Chito Latamblet 1916-1993" (Eternal homage to Chito Latamblé). Photo by author.

Figure 2.2
Award from Cuban government at Latamblé's house in San Justo. The text reads, "Asamblea provincial del poder popular; Guantánamo; El órgano de gobierno reconoce altamente al: Compañero Reyes Latamblé Veranes; como el genuino componente del autóctono género musical guantanamero denominado "El changüí" por su aporte al acervo cultural de su pueblo; Dado en la ciudad de Guantánamo a los 18 días del mes de octubre de 1992 año 34 de la revolución", (Provincial assembly of popular power, Guantánamo; The organ of the state highly recognizes Comrade Reyes Latamblé Veranes as genuine exponent of the autochthonous musical genre, changüí, for his contribution to the cultural heritage of his people; Given in the city of Guantánamo on the 18th day in the month of October 1992, 34th year of the revolution). Photo by author.

He was born and raised in the Loma del Chivo (literally "hill of the goat") neighborhood of Guantánamo, where his family was well known as instrument makers (Figure 2.3). Some houseguests included Sindo Garay and Pepe Sánchez. Against his mother's wishes that he not pursue the "bohemian" lifestyle of a musician, young Chito built his first instrument out of fish-packing crate and three strings before he was eight years old. According to Cambrón, at a young age Chito was already an accomplished

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tresero, playing at neighborhood events and parties.[19] While still underage, Chito went on to play in *estudiantinas* and in the *zona de tolerancia* (literally "zone of tolerance", a red-light district where U.S. soldiers spent their off-duty time in Guantánamo).[20] During

Figure 2.3
The house where Chito Latamblé was born and raised, La Loma del Chivo, Guantánamo.
Photo by author.

one particular gig in the *zona de tolerancia,* his mother and grandfather caught him performing and reprimanded him. As a result, Latamblé went to play with a *grupo infantil* (children's musical group) which later became a *septeto infantil* (children's septet). In 1934, he formed the *conjunto*, Los Jóvenes del Guaso with his brother Arturo. He also worked with Rafael Inciarte Brioso's Orquesta Cristal and Conchita Bravo's group. There was no musical situation that he could not play in; many musicians whom I interviewed over the last few years stated that he was always called when a piano player could not make a particular performance. Inciarte encouraged Chito to form a group dedicated solely to performing changüí, and Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo was consolidated in 1945.

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[19] Carlos Borromeo Planche "Cambrón". Personal Interview. 17 December 1998 Guantánamo, Cuba. For a detailed biography of Chito Latamblé, see the article "Chito Latamblé: Tresero sin igual" by Magda Rosales Rodríguez in *Venceremos*, Dec. 1, 1991, p. 2-3.

[20] An *estudiantina* is a musical group consisting of timbales, claves, maracas, contrabass, one or two treseros, sometimes a guitar, and vocalists.

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visit and the unanimous response is proudly given: Pancho Amat left Guantánamo unable to play changüí. It is difficult to comprehend that someone as gifted as Amat could not grasp the rhythmic complexities of the style, but none of his recordings contains a hint of changüí techniques. Interestingly, Amat's band, Son 14, recorded a song in which the vocalist, El Tiburón (The Shark), sends greetings and praises to Latamblé.[21]

When I visited the Latamblé house in December 1998, his widow and children showed me many photos of the master as a youth and in maturity, and she also let me play his tres. A large metal plaque bearing his portrait greeted me on my way into the house (see Figure 2.1). In order to play the instrument, I had to tune it and add a new string. A capo was left at the second fret and judging from the unfaded fingerboard beneath it, it seems as if it was never moved. This theory is corroborated by the numerous pictures of the maestro that show him playing with a capo at the second fret (see Figure 2.6). Playing with the capo at the second fret is known as the re-fa-la (aA-dd-F#f#) tuning. The great tresero and composer, Rácifo Duran (1920-2000), explained to me that this is the tuning of choice when working with a piano player as it allows for ease of transposition. However, to complicate matters, I also acquired several photos in which there is a capo at the first fret of Latamblé's tres (see Figure

Figure 2.6
Latamblé with capo at second fret
(Courtesy of Casa Inciarte)
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[21] Son 14, *Son como son* Areito/Egrem LD3964 (1981). Liner notes by Frank Fernández.

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2.7). When the tape for this particular solo is slowed down or sped up ±2, the tonality is still very close to Ab Major and not G Major. Thus, it was transcribed in Ab Major and in the following solo, the listener can hear how Chito makes use of the open strings, capoed at the first fret.

The following solo was transcribed from the cassette, *Cuba*, by Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo (La Habana: Siboney/Egrem C274, a re-release of the 1983 Album, *Fiesta changüisera*, La Habana: Egrem LD 274, with liner notes by Danilo Orozco). The track, *Vengan a bailar bailadores* (written by Pedro Speck), is performed by Chito Latamblé - tres, Pedro Speck – voice and maracas, Andrés Fistó Cobas, a.k.a. Taveras – bongó de monte, José "Nino" Olivares Pérez - marímbula, Carlos Borromeo Planche, a.k.a Cambrón – lead vocals and guayo, and Antonio Cisneros Arnaud, a.k.a. Ñico Ya – voice (see Musical Example 2.5).

Figure 2.7
Latamblé with capo at first fret
(Courtesy of Casa Inciarte)
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Listening to the track and looking at the transcription, we can note several characteristics of Chito's style and the larger concept of the tres descarga in the changüí genre.

1) Tremolo Right-hand Technique

Doblando or tremolo picking is an obvious and striking characteristic of Latamblé's personal style. It is a percussive approach to playing a string instrument; in

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the opening four measures of the track, the listener can hear Latamblé striking the face of the instrument with his pick on beats three and four.

2) Harmonic Invention

In the previous chapter, it was pointed out that musicians such as Ramón Gómez Blanco view traditional changüí as harmonically 'closed' and diatonic, in comparison to son. This solo exemplifies how a master musician plays with the norms and constraints of tradition, inserting passing tones, upper extensions of chords, frequent modulations, and non-diatonic chords: a harmonic language that clearly exceeds the limits of major and minor triads. Latamblé's voicings exploit harmonic ambiguities, e.g. A-C-E (C Major 6) for a C chord. In this way he skillfully departs from the I-IV-V diatonic framework.

The tonality of this song is Ab-Major; after playing the montuno four times, Latamblé moves to Ab-minor (measure 9). After some rhythmic embellishments, he continues his exposition of the new Ab-minor tonality through measure 29, then moves back to Ab-Major. Measure 30 shows his creative use of chromaticism in the quarter-note triplet figure, Eb-D natural-Db. This is followed immediately in measure 31 with an Ab-Major ninth chord voiced C-Eb-Bb. Chito stays in Ab-Major until the end of measure 48, when he shifts back to Ab-minor starting with the low F. In measure 53 he moves back to Ab-Major and returns to the montuno in measure 57, but not before altering its rhythm with the D natural-Db-C move in measure 58. The listener should note that this chromatically descending, three-note motive is first treated in measure 30. The montuno is repeated once when the voices return, and then Chito returns to the original, rhythmically unembellished montuno from the beginning.

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3) Thorough Knowledge and Command of Fingerboard

The range of this improvisation covers the playable length of an average instrument, whose neck usually joins the body at the 14th or 15th fret. Latamblé begins the solo in the lower portion of the instrument, up to the fourth fret. Within this space, he is able to move between Ab-Major and Ab-minor comfortably and explore some creative rhythmic possibilities without exerting too much effort with his left hand. By measure 34, we can hear him moving quickly to the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth frets. The audible clue that gives his position away is his sliding into the high Eb played on the bottom course of the instrument. In measure 48, Chito exploits the low F played on the open top-course, instead of playing figures that gradually move down the neck as a means of smoothly transitioning back to the original position of the montuno. Measure 48 also marks the start of his last flirtation with Ab-minor and his return to the position where he began, the first four frets-- thus covering practically the entire playable length of the fingerboard for the keys of Ab-Major and minor within a short time span.

4) Sequences or Repetition of Melodic/Rhythmic Ideas

This solo exemplifies a general improvisational practice that is central to changüí: melodic/rhythmic ideas are played at least twice before moving on.[22] Guillermo Mustelier a.k.a. Bule communicated this concept during our tres lessons in the summer of 1997.[23] This technique allows the soloist to set up a series of expectations for the listener, which

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[22] Manuel writes that "sequential use of contrasting syncopations" is an important characteristic of improvisation in Latin dance music. Peter Manuel, "Improvisation in Latin Dance Music," in *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 138. Chernoff also discusses the concept of setting up a "style" (riff) and then moving on, 109.
[23] Guillermo 'Bule' Mustelier, tres lesson, Guantánamo, Cuba, July-August 1997.

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are alternately satisfied, circumvented, frustrated, or inverted. The practice has its analogue in what Paul Berliner labels "a community of ideas," as motives from these sequences are frequently returned to throughout the course of any given solo.[24] Chito begins the solo with four statements of the Ab-Major montuno, suddenly modulating to Ab-minor without any warning. He plays with the rhythm during a brief display of rhythmic modulation, before settling into a recurring pattern in measure 14. This pattern is repeated and varied two or three times until the end of measure 29, when after getting the listener used to Ab-minor, he shifts abruptly back to Ab-Major. The jazzy rendering of the montuno in measures 30 through half of 34 is abandoned for a new sequence that begins in measure 35 and continues to measure 40. In measure 41, Latamblé gives the listener another lightening-quick flirtation with Ab-Minor that is not fully rendered until measure 49. By measure 54, he returns to Ab-Major and rhythmically varies the montuno a few times before settling back into the main melodic theme of the song.

This solo reaches its climax around measure 35, signaled by the bongocero's shift to the *bramido* (characteristic of the *clímax de despedida*) and Latamblé's position on the fingerboard. The repetition of musical ideas has another useful quality: it leaves spaces for rhythmic interplay and exchange with the bongocero that are easily predictable by the bongocero.

5) Even Concept of *Síncopa*

Latamblé's keen rhythmic sensibility is such that he does not play too far ahead or behind the main pulse. This is an observation about his playing, not a value judgment or

[24] Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 602.

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standard to which other musicians should be held; playing ahead of or behind the beat is not a negative quality. Indeed, at moments within this solo he demonstrates an elastic concept of time when it comes to the manipulation of *síncopa*. Such moments include the metric modulation in measures 10-13 and the return to the montuno in measure 58.

6) Narrative Quality to his Improvisation

In his monumental study of jazz improvisation, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (1994), Paul Berliner shows how jazz musicians strive to "tell a story" within the scope of a given improvisation.[25] In this solo, Chito Latamblé is able to 'say' a good deal in a short space of time. There is a clear narrative flow to this solo in which thematic material is developed, a climax is reached, and the main theme is brought back. Through a combination of the techniques enumerated above, the listener can see the exceptional inventiveness and high skill level that earned Latamblé the title, *tresero mayor* (best tres player).

A Comparison of Three Changüí Tres Styles

From these three transcriptions and their accompanying analyses we can summarize a few important points about the changüí style of tres improvisation. Table 2.1 compares the improvisational styles of these three treseros.

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[25] Ibid, 201-205.

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Table 2.1

A Comparison of Three Treseros

Characteristic	**Tresero**		
	Chito Latamblé	Julian Valier	Yu
1) Formidable right-hand technique	X	X	X
2) Harmonic invention	X	X	
3) Modulation to parallel minor	X		
4) Rhythmic complexity	X	X	X
5) *Doblando*	X	X	
6) Knowledge of the fingerboard	X	X	X
8) Associated with *el monte*/rural style		X	X
9) Associated with urban style	X	X	
10) Uses electric pickup		X	

Harmonic invention and modulation to the parallel minor or major key seem to be more associated with urban changüí—some might see this as evidence of the inevitable penetration of son into changüí. The use of an electric pickup also indicates performance in urban settings with sound systems as opposed to rural situations. Yet, Latamblé, the tresero most associated with the urban sound, seldom performed and recorded changüí with an electric pickup, thus rendering the rural/urban dichotomy too narrow and reductive or perhaps a recent conceptualization that reflects the folklorization process. Similarly, *doblando* is a technique that allows the tres player to give the audio illusion of

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echo or reverb; it is impossible to definitively say if it is a marker of rural or urban practices, but it appears to mark an older style of playing.

In conclusion, these three players have unique personal styles. They remain within the tradition, adhering to the constraints of the music, yet continue to find ways to extend beyond these constraints and express their musical visions. The result is a surprising, entertaining, and clever manipulation of the materials at hand, showing each to be a virtuoso in his own right. As in almost every genre with elements of improvisation, younger tres players in Guantánamo keep their ears tuned to the masters, employing the techniques that they admire or find appealing. In this way the changüí tres *descarga* (improvisation) remains a thriving and competitive tradition.

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Musical Example 2.1
Pastorita Montuno Excerpt

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Musical Example 2.2
Diminished Arpeggio Pattern

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Musical Example 2.3
Yu Tres Solo - *El guararey de Pastora*

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Musical Example 2.4
Valier Tres Solo - *Respétame mi tocar*

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Musical Example 2.5
Latamblé Tres Solo - *Vengan a bailar bailadores*

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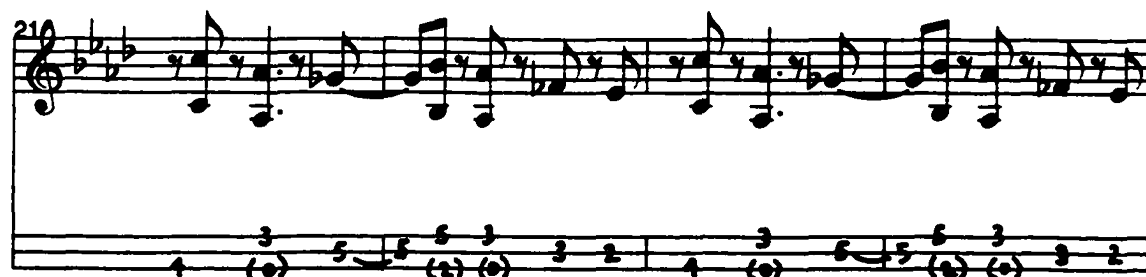

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Chapter 3: The Afro-Haitian Presence in Eastern Cuba and its Significance in the Development of the Cuban *son*.[1]

La Peña de changüí, as sung by Juan Gualberto Vichí Guibert "Bebé"

Composé: Compañeros cuando salga de aquí,
Compañeros cuando yo salga de aquí
Yo me voy con los muchachos pa' la peña de changüí
Composé: Ay yo me voy con to' la gente
Refrain: pa' la peña de changüí
Composé: Ay me llevo a Nino Mendoza
Refrain: pa' la peña de changüí
Composé: Ay llevo a Nino Marimba
Refrain: pa' la peña de changüí
Composé: Ay yo me voy con el Taveras . . .

Lead: Comrades when I leave here
Comrades when I leave here
I am going with the boys to the changüí gathering
I am going with all of the people
Refrain: To the changüí gathering
Lead: I'm going to bring Nino Mendoza
Refrain: To the changüí gathering
Lead: I'm getting Nino Marimba [Olivares]
Refrain: To the changüí gathering
Lead: I'm going with Taveras . . .

Identified only as *Tumba Francesa* on the French CD, *Cuba* (1998), this track demonstrates the interactions and connections that exist between changüí and the multitude of Afro-Haitian musical practices found in Guantánamo, particularly tumba francesa.[2] In this song, the *composé* (lead singer in the tumba francesa) who is also a changüisero declares that when he leaves the tumba francesa gathering he will go to the changüí peña (gathering) and names some changüiseros whom he will gather together.

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[1] This chapter was first read as a paper, "Changüí: La presencia afro-haitiana en el oriente de Cuba y el desarollo del son cubano" (Changüí: The Afro-Haitian Presence in Eastern Cuba and its Significance in the Development of the Cuban *son*). Cuban Counterpoints: The Fernando Ortiz Symposium on Cuban Culture and History, March 20-22, 2000, New York. A revised version will be published with the conference proceedings.

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In pursuing my research on changüí I have found that musicians in Guantánamo move back and forth with ease and fluidity between changüí, son, rumba, and Afro-Haitian genres. For me, this raised several questions about the nature of the relationship between changüí, son, and Afro-Haitian musical genres. Changüí has several features that are archaic in son and might possibly have been taken from early son, which would make changüí a derivative of son, but this scenario is unlikely, as I will argue.

This chapter focuses on two points: the Haitian presence in Oriente (eastern Cuba) contributed significantly to the development of the Cuban son, and changüí, a genre performed mostly by Cubans of Afro-Haitian descent, provides the best musical evidence to support this point. I present a brief overview of the impact of Haitian migration to Guantánamo with the purpose of showing the connection between changüí and the Afro-Haitian genre, *tumba francesa*, among others.

Guantánamo-based groups such as Babul, Banrrará (now based in Havana), and others include many Afro-Haitian folkloric dances and songs in their staged folkloric performances, such as *gagá* (*rará*), *vodou*, *tumba francesa*, *tajona*, maypole dances, and Haitian popular music, among others.[3] At the same time they perform and record changüí and its variants, transitioning between each genre with ease. Interestingly, Babul, whom I saw stage a performance of the Baron Samedi legend, traveled to Guadeloupe in 2000 performing with local *gwo-ká* ensembles and other French-

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[2] *Cuba*. Paris: Air Mail Music SA141024. Compact disc. 1997, track 1.

[3] In Haitian Creole *bann rara* refers to groups of revelers and musicians associated with the carnival street processions (*rara)*.

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Caribbean groups.[4] Babul's director, Ernesto Llewelyn, enthusiastically told me that his musicians learned gwo-ká and other French-Caribbean genres during the trip. Perhaps Cuban variants of gwo-ká will now be heard in Guantánamo, but either way this modern-day inter-island exchange stirs up questions about the exact nature of French-Caribbean musical influence on the Spanish Caribbean, specifically Guantánamo and changüí.

Another case where Afro-Haitian music has been adapted and presented as Cuban is evident when both Babul and Banrrará perform Loumain Casimir's 1930s Haitian pop hit, *Papa Guedé*, during which dancers put chalk on their faces and execute choreographed dances associated with the *loa* (vodou spirit or deity).[5]

Although many of the participants in these groups are of Afro-Haitian and English-Caribbean descent, I have not been able to interview the musicians in Babul and Banrrará as to why and how they chose to emphasize these Afro-Haitian songs and genres. Evidently they have chosen to highlight the connections between many genres heard in and around Guantánamo.

Listening to songs about figures from the legendary past—most of whom have French surnames-- and hearing the stories associated with them, reveals a past which most people outside of Guantánamo know little or nothing about. As seen in the introduction, Cuban writers such as Galan, Alén, and León view changüí as a variant of son while others such as Gómez, Lemus, and myself view changüí as its own genre; in some cases changüí is proclaimed as a direct antecedent to son, or seen as its father or grandfather.

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[4] According to Haitian legend, the cosmic mother, Erzuly Dantó slept with her son Oggún and kills him in despair. Her tears are said to be recovered in the songs of vodou. In her suffering, she brings him back to life in the underworld as Baron Samedi.

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Changüí and the Haitian Connection

The most active and prominent changüí musicians in Guantánamo have been of Haitian descent. The same family names have appeared in local song and history for several generations. Many of the best-known musicians and composers have surnames such as Cadete, Speck, Lescaille, Planche, Creagh, Cobás, Logát, Latamblet, Masó, Arnaud, Mustelier, Durand, Durruthy, Vichí, and Moreaux.[6] Some of these musicians were among the first generation born in Cuba to Haitian parents while others confirmed that their grandparents were Haitian. There have also been a few musicians whose English surnames, such as Wilson and Brown, reflect an Anglophone-Caribbean heritage. All of the important musicians playing this genre of music are of African descent. In fact, there have been few non-black changüiseros.

Many changüiseros played and continue to play Afro-Haitian genres such as tumba francesa, *tambuey*, and *montompolo*. Examples of such multi-faceted musicians include Cambrón, Bebé, Banrrará, Ariel Daudinot Brooks, Ernesto Llewelyn, and the members of Babul who also perform in Los Morenos del Changüí, among many others (see Figure 3.1). Other changüiseros still speak Creole with their families and actively participate in Vodou. Many of the musicians who came from the mountains to the city were active in Afro-Haitian musical and cultural activities in the villages surrounding the city of Guantánamo.

In some cases, I encountered changüiseros, such as Justo Kindelán, who learned to play and dance in the tumba francesa as a result of living next door to a tumba francesa

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[5] Guedé or Gedé is a vodou spirit associated with death and cemeteries.

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gathering space. The son of Haitian parents, who migrated to Guantánamo in 1916, Marcelino Ruiz grew up next to a combatant in the war of independence (1895-1898) who exposed him to tumba francesa. At home, Marcelino's parents performed traditional Haitian music with accordion and percussion. Marcelino indicated that there were more differences than similarities between tumba francesa performed in Cuba and similar genres performed by Haitians in Haiti such as *tambuyé*.[7] For Marcelino, these differences were linguistic, organological, and based on dance.[8] For the most part, many of the changüiseros that I interviewed could execute and distinguish amongst various catá and drum pattern in tumba francesa.

Figure 3.1
At the far left, Carlos Borromeo Planche "Cambrón," legendary changüí singer and guayo player seen here playing the catá at a tumba francesa performance ca. 1980.
Courtesy Casa Inciarte.
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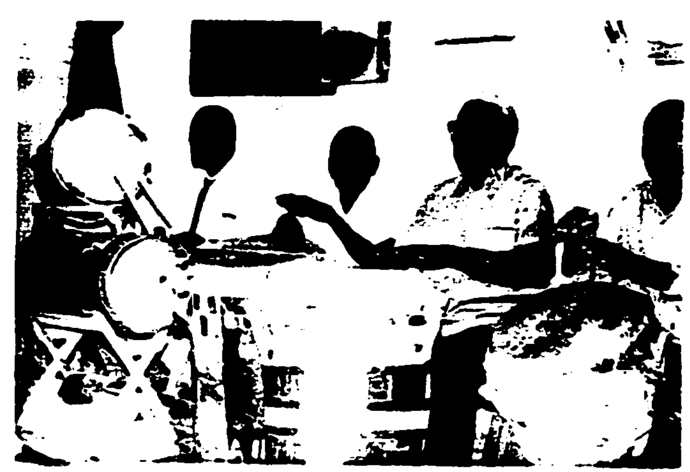

The First Wave of Haitian Migration to Cuba and its Related Music

Haitian migration to Cuba took place in two major waves. At the beginning of the Haitian revolution in 1791, white planters began to flee the island of Hispaniola. Some

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[6] Carlos Padrón, *Franceses en el suroriente de Cuba* (La Habana: Universales Unión, 1997), 68-100. Padrón's list is helpful, especially in respellings of French names, e.g. Lescaille (Lescay).
[7] *Tambuyé* is an unspecific term that many musicians of Haitian descent used to label Haitian drum and dance genres.
[8] Marcelino Ruiz Hipólito, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 16 August 1999.

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settled in New Orleans while most others remained in the Caribbean. Juan Pérez de la Riva estimates that between 1795 and 1805 more than 30,000 people from Hispaniola settled in Oriente. Approximately 20,000 were not white.[9] The white planters brought their domestic slaves and agricultural laborers with them. Within a short time the planters used their technical ingenuity and expertise to create a thriving coffee industry and improve the quality of the crop in their new country.

This large influx of French creole and Afro-Haitian immigrants created a vibrant community in Oriente. Shortly after the arrival of white planters, free blacks and mulattos began arriving in large numbers and continued to do so throughout the nineteenth century. French planters and *mayorals* (overseers) had reputations as being especially harsh.[10] Nevertheless, the slaves of Haitian descent found ways to express themselves and maintain their culture in this new environment. Cultural practices such as Creole language and vodou were maintained, even though they changed. Tumba francesa and tajona are two of the main genres which originated in this period.

The music and dance of the tumba francesa have strong French and Afro-Haitian elements. First, the society has a specific hierarchy, which mimics French aristocracy. The *mayor* or *mayora de plaza* directs and chooses all of the orders of the dances and the changing of the dance steps. They also decide which dancers will perform and maintain a sense of royalty through curtsies and similar actions. The *composé* leads songs in Creole. As his name suggests, he composes and improvises songs. The chorus is usually made up of women, although I have seen men participate. The chorus uses metal rattles called

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[9] Pérez de la Riva, 17.
[10] Olga Portuondo Zuñiga, "La región de Guantánamo: de la producción de consumo a la de mercancias," *Del Caribe* IV, no. 10 (1987): 12.

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chachás. Ortiz confirmed the Haitian origin of the chachá and wrote that "Sin duda, ese tipo cubano de *maruga cilindrica* o *chachá* procede de Haití y otras islas de influencia francesa" (without a doubt, this Cuban type of rattle comes from Haiti and other French islands)."[11] Judith Bettleheim has also noted that the names of the instruments in the tumba francesa battery (which include the *premier*, *bulá*, *ségon*, and *catá*) and their specific rhythms take their names from Haitian instruments and genres.[12]

The two main styles for the ensemble are *masón* and *yubá*; each has its own dance. The masón is danced by couples and is thought to be based on the *contredanse* of the French plantocracy.[13] During the masón, another small double-headed drum, the *tambora*, is added. The dance that accompanies this style is a side-to-side movement with each shift in body weight occurring on the marked spot of the catá pattern (see Musical Example 3.1). Interestingly, tumba francesa and its distinct music and dance forms, such as yubá and masón are not found in Haiti. Either they are marginal survivals or else neo-Haitian genres, which coalesced in Cuba.

Ortiz suggests that the *comparsas congas* in Oriente could possibly have began as imitations of Haitian carnival processions called *congó*, further evidence of this link between the two islands.[14] Just as one can see Haiti from the coast of Guantánamo, one

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[11] Ortiz, *Instrumentos,* vol. 1, 305-306.
[12] Judith Bettleheim, "The tumba francesa and tajona of Santiago de Cuba," *Cuban Festivals*, ed. Judith Bettleheim. (New York: Garland, 1993), 178. For transcriptions of tumba francesa see Olavo Alén Rodríguez, *La música de las sociedades de tumba francesa en Cuba* (La Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1986), 136-181.
[13] Ibid, 179.
[14] Fernando Ortiz, *Los Instrumentos de la música afrocubana*, vol. 2. 1952 (Madrid, Spain: Editorial Música Mundana maqueda: La Habana, Cuba: Fundación Fernando Ortiz, 1996), 45.

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hears Haiti in the music of Guantánamo. Miguel Barnet affirms this when he says: "Oriente is like another country, so close to Haiti."[15]

The Second Wave of Haitian Migration to Cuba and its Related Music

The second major wave of Haitian migration to Cuba took place during the twentieth century. Mats Lundahl attributes this wave to economic factors such as the need for laborers in Cuba after the war of 1895-98, the growth of the Haitian population, and the lack of land available to Haitian peasants as a result of the U.S. occupation of Haiti (1915-1934).[16] Pérez de La Riva estimates that more than 500,000 Haitians came to Cuba between 1902-1930.[17] Haitian *braceros* (day laborers), along with Jamaican laborers, were brought in under unfavorable conditions to cut sugar cane. Compared to the Jamaican laborers, the Haitians were mistreated and forcibly repatriated during times of economic depression. They often kept to themselves and settled in remote mountain areas near Santiago de Cuba.[18] In Guantánamo, Haitians settled near the sugar *centrales* (plantations) and in the city. This heritage is tangible in culinary, religious, linguistic, and musical traditions such as *méringue*, *tambuyé*, *gagá*, and vodou among others.[19] Contact with Haiti was also maintained during the 1970's and 80's as boatloads of Haitians visited Guantánamo for medical care. Space does not allow for an explanation

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[15] *What's Cuba Playing At?* [¿Qué se toca Cuba?] Arena/BBC LMA L024H, 1985. 60 minutes. Videocassette.
[16] Lundahl, 24-26.
[17] Pérez de la Riva, 53.
[18] McLeod, 606.

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Figures 3.2 and 3.3
Drum/dance dialogue in *frente cobrado* between male solo dancer and premier
(Courtesy of Casa Inciarte)
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of each musical style associated with more recent Haitian migration, but one rhythmic pattern, the *tresillo*, is central to many of them, particularly gagá and méringue.

Musical Correlations Between Changüí and Tumba Francesa

Close examination of changüí bongó patterns reveals a striking similarity to tumba francesa premier improvisation patterns (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3). The low pitch of changüí bongó de monte is similar to the low pitch of the tumba francesa's premier. Local musicologists feel that the changüí marímbula pattern is derived from the first two

[19] Manriela Méndez Ceballo, María Cubeira Palomo, Lourdes San Fat, "Influencias de las inmigraciones haitianas en el ámbito cultual y costumbrista de la provincia de Guantánamo," *El Managüí* 2, no. 4 (1987): 27.

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attacks of the catá pattern in tumba francesa (see Musical Example 3.1); changüí dancers step with the marímbula and in tumba francesa dancers often step with the catá. Furthermore, the *masón* tambora pattern in tumba francesa is the same as the changüí bongó part during the climax de despedida. Both could be derived from the *cinquillo* pattern or the Haitian gagá pattern. In a 1980's BBC documentary, Danilo Orozco explains the relationship between changüí and tumba francesa dance steps:

> Changüí dancers show influences of dance steps which are seen, in tumba francesa, but in another form. Especially in the shoulder movements and the lateral steps.[20]

Interestingly, tumba francesa is organized around time lines played by the catá. In contrast, changüí has no parts that act as timelines.

Tumba francesa was originally danced in *cafetales* (coffee plantations). Similarly, the dance step for a style older than changüí, called *nengón*, requires moving one's foot in a circle.[21] Some regional dance specialists have explained this motion as mimetic, as if one were spreading coffee to dry. Changüí and nengón come from the same rural coffee regions (Las Cidras, Yateras, etc.) where there were many people of Haitian descent and tumba francesa groups. There might be a relation between changüí and tumba francesa based on this evidence, but as of this writing it is still remains hypothetical.

As noted in Chapter 1, during changüí performance the tres is obligated to play *pasos de calle* between each line of verse. These are arpeggiations of whichever triad a line of the verse ends on, usually tonic, dominant, or subdominant. While these figures

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[20] *What's Cuba Playing At?* (1985). "En los bailadores de Changüí, hay algunas influencias también de pasos que se observan en la tumba francesa pero en otra forma. En tanto en el movimiento de los hombros, en los pasillos laterals."

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are cadential they also serve to prepare the singer for the next line. These are easily audible between each line of verse. This is an interesting use of an archaic term: as postulated in Chapter 2, the term comes from the Spanish *pasacallo*. It is also possible that the term took hold in eastern Cuba from European contredanses practiced by the French plantocracy.

Connections Between Changüí and Son

From a musical perspective, the claim that changüí is the direct predecessor to son has some merit. Comparing the rhythmic patterns and roles of the instruments reveals a few interesting points that support this argument. Our best sources of knowledge of early son are recordings by groups such as Sexteto Boloña, as well as Sexteto and Septeto Habanero.[22] Early recordings demonstrate that the first son groups were organologically similar to the changüí ensemble.

When listening to early recordings of El Sexteto Habanero and other groups (ca. 1925-1931), one can hear the bongó player make much use of the *bramido* (gliss). As seen in Chapter 1, this is a howling or moaning sound characteristic of the climax section during a traditional changüí performance. It is also interesting to hear that like a changüí bongocero, El Sexteto Habanero's bongocero plays few time-keeping patterns and is mostly improvising. This seems to have been the dominant style for playing the bongó in a son context at that time.

[21] Chapter 5 discusses nengón and other variants of changüí.
[22] Sexteto y Septeto Habanero, *Grabaciones Completas 1925-1931* (1998) Tumbao Cuban Classics TCD300; 4 CDs with accompanying liner notes and photos *Las raíces del son* by Sénen Suárez.

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The rhythm of the changüí marímbula begins to appear in the *tumbadora* (conga) patterns in recordings of son from the 1940s and 1950s, and is now an established trait of son.[23] Second, the rhythm of the bongó de monte during the *climax de despedida* (climax before ending the song), a variant of the tresillo, is found in the bass patterns of son recordings from the same period, becoming the standard *bajo anticipado* figure that characterizes son bass lines. In addition, the cowbell pattern commonly heard in son recordings of the 1940s and 1950s and in today's son is identical to the changüí guayo pattern. Finally, these same patterns have endured in contemporary performance practice of son, salsa, and other genres, both in Cuba and beyond its shores.

Many sones, regardless of era, begin with the tres playing an arpeggiation of a single chord in a rhythmic fashion, before the other instruments enter. In comparison to the typical tres introduction in son, the llamada de montuno of changüí has more arpeggios of different chords, played in a shorter space of time. The arpeggios from changüí appear to have been stretched out in son. This explanation would also support the view that changüí preceded son (see Musical Example 3.1). Son is harmonically richer than changüí, and current son treseros, such as Cotó (Juan de la Cruz Antomarchi), execute complex musical ideas that are as harmonically and technically challenging as those of modern jazz.[24]

If one follows the argument of most theories and chronologies of Cuban musical development, specifically that the son as performed in Eastern Cuba was brought

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[23] Arsenio Rodríguez, *Dundunbanza* (1994) [1946-1951] Tumbao Cuban Classics TCD043.

[24] Juan de la Cruz Antomarchi, a.k.a. "Cotó" is a master tresero born and raised in Guantánamo who currently resides in Havana. Good examples of his playing can be

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westward by soldiers and migrants, then it is conceivable that changüí developed into son as it traveled west. Sometime during this transformation and geographic shift at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth (1898-1920), the difficult patterns of the tres and bongó, normally found in changüí, became less syncopated. In recordings, one can hear the use of the bramido as late as the 1920s, but it disappears in later recordings of son. Similarly, vestiges of the free, improvised style of the changüí bongó are audible in early son recordings of the 1920s only to disappear in the 1930s with a shift to *martillo*, the steady, time-marking son bongó pattern. Most scholars agree that the clave figure in son derives from rumba clave as heard in Havana and Matanzas; the only difference between son and rumba clave is one eighth note.

Perhaps as musical characteristics from other genres and regions were added to son during the course of its development, these elements were altered and made less syncopated. Thus, the clave figure found in rumba is smoothed out and transformed by one eighth note so that it is less syncopated when used in son. One possible consequence of this transformative process is that the high degree of syncopation in changüí was significantly diminished when it encountered the rigid timeline of the son clave, resulting in the rhythmic uniformity and smoothness of the son's choreography and music. The high degree of syncopation in changüí makes it more difficult to dance to when compared to son. Fewer dancers dance contratiempo to son, and most Cuban genres do not emphasize dancing contratiempo as changüí does. Is this a positive indicator of changüí's older age? These are all hypotheses, but changüí, to a greater degree than son, is a genre that exploits highly syncopated musical ideas and movements.

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heard on Cotó y Su Eco del Caribe, *A mi yemaya* EGREM CD 0254 (1997), as well as

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Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to show how the Haitian presence in Oriente contributed, via changüí, to the development of the son. The implications of the musical and historical evidence presented thus far warrant further investigation and study in Oriente. First, changüí has strong links to tumba francesa and other Afro-Haitian genres. Second, the absence of clave and the high degree of syncopation indicate that it probably came before son. An examination of dance styles supports the view that the son's choreography is smoother and more 'creolized' than the choreography for changüí which emphasizes 'offbeat aesthetics.' Although I interviewed numerous first and second generation Haitians who play changüí, they never offered specific statements about how changüí and Afro-Haitian genres are or were related: most simply stated that they enjoyed and performed all of these musics.

In her response to this chapter in its conference paper form, Dr. Maria Teresa Linares stated that there is a homogeneity of musical elements which keeps changüí within the taxonomical grouping of the son complex. Throughout the conference, participants debated Ortiz's concept of transculturation, and during our panel's discussion Linares stated what she felt to be the musical implications of the term *transculturation.* In her view, the genres within the son complex used the same instruments, but in unique ways. Drawing a map of Cuba, Dr. Linares showed how migration from Oriente to Isla de la Juventud created the genre sucu-sucu, which in her opinion sounds rhythmically similar to changüí and is also part of the son complex. In a 1982 article she writes that many texts used in sucu-sucu come from sones that were written long before in Oriente

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later recordings by Elio Revé and on tour with Cubanismo.

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or other regions, indicative of travel by soneros in the 1920s.[25] Her descriptions of sucu-sucu in the same article make it appear closer to changüí than her conference rebuttal indicated: she explains that the tres initiates the music before the other instruments join in; a tumbadora or bongó plays freely; maracas and a scraped machete play an ostinato [as they do in changüí]; the couple dances without hip or arm movements focusing on complicated footwork; In contrast to changüí, claves are used. [26] The example of sucu-sucu that Linares included in her recorded collection *Cancionero Hispano-Cubano* is not fully consistent with this description, and the transcriptions in the article give only the melody and lyrics.[27] All of the instruments are present from the start, the five-stroke clave pattern is not present, and neither a bongó nor a tumbadora is audible; thus no freely improvised figures are heard.

Fieldwork in and around Guantánamo indicates that changüí as it is performed there has a specific set of behavioral expectations and musical practices that one could not find outside of the region.[28] Rare exceptions of changüiseros living beyond Guantánamo and performing traditional changüí can be heard.[29] Obviously, any attempt at revising or questioning the processes by which national genres develop and how these

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[25] María Teresa Linares, "El sucu-sucu: un caso en el area del Caribe" *Ensayos de música latinoamericana* (La Habana: Casas de las Américas, 1982), 273.
[26] Ibid, 281.
[27] *Cancionero Hispano-Cubano*. Liner notes by María Teresa Linares. La Habana: Areito LDA-3326. Phonorecord. 1970, side B track 8.
[28] People from outside of Guantánamo often cite the music of Elio Revé and Los Van Van as examples of changüí, but their performances bear no musical resemblance to changüí as performed today by musicians in Guantánamo. Chapter 7 shows how changüí is performed and conceived both within the province of Guantánamo and beyond its geographic boundaries.
[29] Los Tutankamen, "La muerte es muy natural," *Cuban Counterpoint: History of the Son Montuno*, Rounder CD 1078 (1992); this example dates from the 1970s and was recorded in Havana.

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genres should be classified is bound to stir up controversy. When the "business" side of the conference concluded, Pedro Sarduy put a changüí song on the stereo system. As people began to dance, I took the opportunity to show Dr. Linares how one dances changüí. Before parting ways she admitted never doing any fieldwork in Guantánamo and suggested that I contact her during my next leg of fieldwork so that she could examine things for herself. I would like to make my way to the Isla de la Juventud and spend time with sucu-sucu in situ.

Hopefully scholars will move quickly to look beneath the clichés about the roots of the son and other musical genres. Discussing "the transformation of what happened into that which is said to have happened," Michel-Rolf Trouillot writes that "chronology replaces process."[30] Similarly, the current narrative of the son's historical development as articulated in books by Galán, León, and others excludes the achievements and developments of musicians from Guantánamo and reduces the son's history to a few key dates such as 1909, the year when musicians in the *ejército permanente* brought the son to Havana and areas west of Oriente.

National narratives emphasize the names of musicians, compositions, and performers preserved in print and in recordings of the 1920s. One example of this practice is the much debated *Son de la Ma Teodora*, alleged to be the oldest son in Cuba and attributed to two Dominican sisters in the late sixteenth century. Changüí lyrics offer names of musicians and their stories-- clear indications of what their music meant. We can better form questions about son, its early history, and the environment in which it developed by looking at changüí and other genres throughout Cuba

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Local narratives discuss many genres and musical developments by name, offering a more detailed genealogy than the standard, "the son was brought to Havana in 1909." These include narratives offered by Guantánamo-based researchers and musicians such as Ramón Gómez Blanco and María Josefa Sánchez Heredia that seek to trace the son's development as a coherent progression from nengón to changüí and ultimately to son not only within Guantánamo and Oriente, but also throughout the rest of Cuba. Additionally a comparative approach that considers the centuries-old intra-Caribbean migration and cultural exchange could provide more answers, or at least more questions. Clearly, this is a topic of interest to Cuban scholars. Interested in the non-Cuban Caribbean presence in Guantánamo, the authors of *Estudios musicológicos: provincia Guantánamo* (1987) conducted 45 interviews and recorded musical groups that have roots in other areas of the Caribbean.[31] By their own admission the fieldwork did not allow them to make any conclusions at the time of the report's writing. Furthermore, the report does not include transcriptions.

Some scholars such as Linares and Martha Esquenazi Pérez have taken some steps to pursue these questions, particularly with regard to how Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean musics underwent changes once they came into contact with Cuban music and musicians on Cuban soil (Linares 1982, Esquenazi 2001). Preferring to label these new musics as variants grouped within larger established Cuban genre complexes, these same scholars stop short of using formal musical analysis to

[30] Michel-Rolf Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 113.
[31] Alén, Olavo and Maria Elena Vinueza et al, *Estudios musicológicos: provincia Guantánamo* (La Habana: Centro de Investigación y Desarollo de la Música Cubana, 1987), 50.

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hypothesize specific musical characteristics, other than instruments, which these non-Cuban musics may have brought to son.

Jésus Gómez Cairo is one Cuban scholar who does allow for specific regional and cross-genre contributions in his conceptualization of the transformative process that created son, albeit without musical analysis. He writes:

> The cycle of internal and external migrations, forced or promoted by the colonial power, like that [effected] subsequently by the republic's governments, and which was prolonged until the second decade of the present century, explains three of the properties of the dynamic of Cuban musical folklore for this period: 1) the settlement in some areas of the country of forms of folklore of other Caribbean countries (for example tumba francesa), 2) the transfer and cultivation throughout the territory of the island of specific genres of folklore, originally characteristic of specific zones (for example son and rumba) and 3) the interaction of some of these genres is directly linked to the fact of their geographic dispersion (at first of local character— the son— or restricted to certain social groups— the rumba—) and its conversion into integral parts of the national folklore.[32]

Could we find more links between organologically similar musics in other islands? Perhaps we should take cues from the musicians and dancers in groups such as Babul and Banrrará. Through analysis perhaps more specific claims could be made as to how connected certain genres really are. Don Fernando Ortiz pursued a comparative approach

[32] Gómez Cairo, 124: "El ciclo de migraciones internas y externas, forzadas o promovidas por el poder colonial, así como posteriormente por los gobiernos republicanos, y que se prolonga hasta la segunda década del presente siglo explica tres de las propiedades de la dinámica del folclor musical cubano para el período señalado: 1) el asentamiento en algunas areas del país de formas del folclor de otros países del Caribe (por ejemplo las tumbas francesa), 2) la traslación y propagación por el territorio de la isla de determinados géneros del folclor, originalmente propios de zonas específicas (como por ejemplo el son y la rumba) y 3) la interacción de algunos de estos géneros entre sí y con la música profesional. Esta interacción de géneros está directamente ligada al hecho de la traslación geográfica de los mismos (al principio de carácter local—el son— o restringidos a ciertos grupos sociales —la rumba—) y su conversión en partes integrantes del folclor nacional."

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throughout his career that should serve as a model to follow. In this case, the music shows how extensive these exchanges were and continue to be.

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Musical Example 3.1
Son and Afro-Haitian Musical Characteristics

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Chapter 4: Historicity and Self-Referencing in Changüí Songs

El 21 de Mayo[1]

El 21 de mayo qué buena fiesta en Cecilia.
Allí nos encontrábamos,
Ciertos tocadores y yo.
El célebre Julio Nuñez, Mario, Montalvo y Masó.
Qué bueno, qué bueno estaba eso.
Son cuatro los generales que gobernaban la región.
Guía: Vamos a bailar, vamos a gozar, que ya Masó esta en la rumba.
Montuno: Vamos a bailar, vamos a gozar, que ya Masó esta en la rumba.

May 21, what a great party in Cecilia.
There we found certain players and myself.
The celebrated Julio Nuñez, Mario [Estrada], [Pedro] Montalvo and Masó
How good, how good was that.
These were the four generals who ruled the region.
Lead: Let's dance, let's enjoy, 'cause now Masó is at the party.
Refrain: Lead: Let's dance, let's enjoy, 'cause now Masó is at the party

Filled with rich details, this song is a lesson in local musical history. To begin, Cecilia was a sugar *central* (processing center), roughly six kilometers east and slightly north of the city of Guantánamo, which existed until the beginning of the revolution. Surrounded by *bateyes* (cane fields), cane workers would relax and seek recreation through music. This song details such a gathering that occurred on May 21, 1927 according to Inciarte's notes. Four musicians are named (Julio Nuñez, Mario, Montalvo and Pedro Masó) and referred to as generals, suggesting that together, they are the best in the region. In the refrain, Masó is characterized as the one who truly gets the party going. Two important themes can be easily pointed out within this one song: local fame and competition between musicians. Three other interesting themes are also demonstrated: the propensity to put historical data into song such as names, dates, and places; the use of

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analogies and other creative poetic language to describe common events; and deliberate presentation of changüí as both a social event with swinging music, dancing, drinking, eating, and musical competition and as a musical genre. In this way song lyrics take advantage of, revel in, and play with the dual meanings of the word changüí; many songs discuss one or both of these meanings.

The overwhelming majority of changüí songs are about performing it, its virtues, local personalities and musicians, local history, and pride. Love songs are secondary, and songs that address political and gender issues are even more rare. How could one more accurately categorize and analyze changüí songs? In her important study of Mexican *corridos*, Herrera-Sobek defines four archetypes based on recurring characters in the songs.[2] Unlike *corridos*, changüí songs do not begin with stock phrases, such as "I am going to sing a changüí about x..." This difference can be attributable to the fact that corridos are text-driven narratives while changüí songs are used for dance music. One can distinguish topics in changüí along five major thematic lines: (1) parties and their resulting songs; (2) the genre itself within which one finds discussion of (a) instruments, (b) musicians and their exploits as well as *homenajes* (homages) to departed changüiseros, and (c) attributes of the genre; (3) local history of Guantánamo; (4) love songs; and (5) songs with political content. These five themes overlap significantly, and certain songs touch on all five themes. The lyrics of many songs point to the competitive atmosphere in which the treseros of the legendary past operated. Changüí lyrics may

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[1]Local musicians acknowledge Pedro Masó, the legendary tresero, as the true composer of this song and refer to it as *Fiesta en Cecilia*, but legal authorship is claimed by Faustino Oramas, "El Guayabero", who has named it *El 21 de Mayo*.

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report disputes on such topics as musicianship, improvising skills, reputation, and history of the genre; many songs express regional pride. This chapter presents several changüí songs along with their associated stories. Textual analysis of the songs provides insight into the historicity and self-referencing nature of the genre and the ways in which past events and musicians are inscribed into local oral history.

Changüí songs can also be grouped in a number of constructive ways beyond their thematic content. First, several names recur in many of the songs and in putting these songs together, I have been able to piece together information about these particular individuals. Clusters of musicians, usually grouped by generation, appear in particular songs, and throughout this discussion these songs will be presented in as chronologically accurate a manner as possible. There is almost no printed biographical data available for most of the musicians named in these songs; much of the information was taken from Rafael Inciarte's notes and my own interviews. Second, textual content often differentiates the songs along generational lines, so that a song about Pedro Masó is presumably older than a song about a more recently departed changüisero such as Cambrón. Third, melodic complexity and more personal lyrics usually indicate an older song conceived by a tresero. Supporting this theory is both the ease with which these songs lie on the fingerboard of the tres and the way in which the development of melodic material follows the exposition of a particular hand position. As fewer and fewer tres players sing the lead vocal part in changüí ensembles, the melodic complexity of current songs is significantly lesser than older songs attributed to Pedro Masó, Mosqueda, Julio

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[2] María Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido: A Feminist Analysis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), xix.

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Nuñez, Juan Logát, and others of their generational cluster. This seems to hold true for subsequent generational clusters of musicians such as Roberto Bautá Segarra, Rácifo Durán, and more recently, Taveras. While Ido Torres, Ariel Daudinot Brooks, and other non-tres playing composers shatter this assertion with their beautiful and complex melodies, in general an elaborate setting of text to music indicates facility with the tres and knowledge of the instrument's fingerboard.

In folkloric stage presentations by Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, Los Universales del Son, and Estrellas Campesinas, the performers balance their performance between older and newer songs, often differentiating between the two types, depending on the audience. In my experience at informal party situations, songs are always performed without explanations, and the differences between old and new songs are not articulated. A number of groups, such as Los Seguidores de Changüí and El Changüí de Ñico Ya are dedicated to performing rare songs that are not part of most groups' current repertoire. Even among the aforementioned groups, many choose to perform a mixture of changüí 'originals' and 'standards', so that the repertoire is constantly shifting according to individual tastes. In light of this information, let us meet some of these legendary musicians, learn of their exploits and enjoy their changüí.

Parties and Their Resulting Songs

José Cadete come majá (José Cadete eats *majá* [a local snake]) is a rare song that is not heard today, whose text reveals little. Throughout the song the protagonist, José Cadete, is ridiculed for eating the snake without removing its scales, as is the local custom. I learned this song from Rácifo Durán (1914-2000), a prolific changüí composer

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and tres player and the only changüísero of his generation to read and write music. He told me that he learned the song from his father. He performed it for me and explained the song's history.

Dicen que José Cadete come majá
sin quitarle el pellejo, ¡ay dios!
No se si despues de viejo
todavía lo comera
Montuno: José Cadete come majá.

They say that José Cadete eats majá
without taking off the skin, oh lord!
I don't know if, now that he's old
he still eats it.
Refrain: José Cadete eats majá.

According to Rácifo Durán, Cadete's son enjoyed taking his horse to go to the changüís in the mountains. At one particular party, the boy saw a tresero named Rafael Odio singing this song, which poked fun at his father. Returning from the party, José Cadete asked his son how the party was. The son replied that it was fun, but that the partygoers were singing something that was not so nice. When pressured to describe the not-so-nice song, the younger Cadete avoided giving his father a clear answer. His son's reluctance only increased Cadete's frustration, and eventually the boy told his father about the song. Incensed, Cadete grabbed his machete, running to find the man who sang the song. The boy did not know Odio's name and could only tell his father to search for a short black man playing the tres. Arriving at the party, Cadete proceeded to question the revelers, finally focusing on Odio. When Odio convinced Cadete that there were many short black men at the party who could have sung the song, Cadete let him go because he did not want to kill the wrong man. Thus, Odio escaped with his life and outsmarted Cadete. Odio's name is conspicuously absent from the lyrics and Odio and Cadete are two names

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that do not appear among the countless songs about parties and musicians, further suggesting the song's lack of diffusion and age.

Rácifo Durán delighted in sharing songs that poked fun at individuals and he composed some of these songs as well. In his own words, he explained to me that, "antes el changüí era tira-tira" (before, changüí was about poking fun).[3] The obvious situation for poking fun at an individual would be a changüí party. The majority of songs in the genre's current repertoire do not poke fun at individuals. Perhaps this is indicative of the way in which the folklorization process can change certain elements of a genre.

María Guevara is a song about a noted female tres player and renowned changüisera with the same name:

La pobre María Guevara,
Que ella tiene guararey.
Porque a ella no la invitaron
a la cumbancha del Yarey.
Guía: Ay María Guevara me botó
Montuno: por la cumbancha del Yarey

Poor Maria Guevara,
she has a bone to pick
Because they didn't invite her
to the party in Yarey.
Lead: María Guevara threw me out
Refrain: at the party in Yarey

According to notes that Inciarte took at a 1968 rehearsal by Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, this song is classified as a *jirivilla...mas movido* (literally 'jumpy,' another more lively style of changüí) and the composer is listed as Maure (Mario Estrada), the legendary tresero who appears in *El 21 de Mayo*. In recordings, it is not attributed to any

[3] José Díaz Planes and Rácifo Durán Durruthy, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 13 August 1999.

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specific composer but is performed frequently to this day. The lyrics are unambiguous in their meaning. Today fewer and fewer people know the persons discussed in these songs, such as Pedro Masó, Julio Nuñez, Juan Logát, Montalvo, María Guevara, et al, but the songs continue to be performed. Thus, even if the story surrounding the song is unknown, the memory of the party and the names of the protagonists are preserved and transmitted.

The Changüí Genre

Probably the greatest number of changüí songs is written about the instruments that make up the ensemble, how to play the music and who plays or played what instrument, and the virtues of changüí. The following songs focus on the instrumentation of a given changüí ensemble and the joy in performing the genre:

Como se toca se baila, Marcelino Ruiz

La música llamada changüí
Es buena y medicinal (2x)
Ésta sí puede gozar
Con instrumentos criollos
No es una música loca
Sí lo que es
Acentuada para bailar
Montuno: Como se toca se baila, como se baila se toca.

The music called changüí
Is good and medicinal
You can enjoy it
With Creole instruments
It's not crazy music
What it really is,
Is accentuated in order to dance
Refrain: Play it like you dance it, dance it like you play it

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The assertion that changüí is executed with Creole instruments points to the very "Cubanness" of changüí and is a way for local musicians to place themselves in the larger picture of the Cuban nationalist musical project.

Mi changüí tiene picante, by Felina Martínez, thoroughly explores the music/food analogy: each musical component is equated and treated like a cooking ingredient, à la King Curtis's "Memphis Soul Stew":

Como un buen menu el changüí tiene su sazón (2x)
Y si le falta ingredientes a … le cambia el buen sabor.
Y no le puede faltar sus ingredients que son:
Guayo, maracas, marímbula, tres, bongó,
Como lo traigo completo, por eso lo invito yo a que pruebe mi changüí
Y verá que buen sabor, ¿por qué?
Montuno: Tiene picante el changüí, tiene picante.

Like a good menu, changüí has its seasoning
And if it's missing its ingredients, this will change its good flavor
And it can't have any of its ingredients missing, which are:
Guayo, maracas, marímbula, tres, bongo.
I bring it complete, this is why I invite you to try my changüí
And you will see what a good flavor, why?
Refrain: It has spice, changüí, it has spice.

In a similar fashion, *Bárbaro Changüí,* by "Cachupiru," lists the instruments and their assigned roles within the ensemble:

Traigo un changüí de clara sonoridad
Donde el bongó al tres quiere replicar.
Y las maracas que se empeñan en hablar
Venga la marímbula que no se cansa de tarrear. (2x)
El guayo, hablando patois, le dijo una vez al tres. (2x)
Dame homenaje pa' changüiseros, dame homenjae pa' usted.
Montuno: Bárbaro changüí, este changüí es una barbaridad

I bring a changüí of clear sonority
Where the bongo wants to respond to the tres in a lively manner.
And the maracas, that insist on speaking
Here comes the marímbula that never tires of working its task.
The guayo speaking patois, I already mentioned the tres

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Give me an homage for changüiseros, give me an homage for you
Refrain: Barbarous changüí, this changüí is a barbarity [really excellent, cf. 'bad']

This song is particularly interesting because the line that the guayo is "speaking patois" shows the acknowledgement of Haitian influences on changüí.

Herminio Correoso's *Así es el changüí* is another song that is often performed by different changüí groups:

En Cuba es tradicional, las maracas y el bongó (2x)
Una guitarra hecho al tres, el changüí es para bailar(2x)
Oiganlo bien, eso es verdad (2x)
Con las maracas y bongo, el changüí es para gozar (2x)
Guia: Ay, yo quiero bailar
Montuno: con el changüí.

In Cuba it is traditional, the maracas and the bongo
A guitar made into a tres, the changüí is for dancing
Listen to it well, this is the truth
With the maracas and the bongo, changüí is for enjoyment
Lead: Oh, I want to dance
Refrain: with changüí

The following song's title and composer are unknown to me at this time, but it will be referred to here as *Como bailaban el changüí* (How they danced changüí). The song humorously answers the question of how the ancestors danced changüí by discussing the substance and quality of the party, not technique. Thus, changüí is not to be considered a mere dance or musical genre, but an event with certain behavioral expectations such as the earthen dance floor, rum, and roasted pigs, and it must last the whole night and through the morning:

Si alguien pregunta, si alguien pregunta
Como nuestros ancestres bailaban este changüí (2x)
Con un lechón en la púa y de hecho un enrama' (2x)
Tomando ron de madrugada y un changüí que no tenía cuando acabar (2x)
Montuno: Por la mañana me voy, cuando amanezca me voy.

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If anyone asks, if anyone asks,
How our ancestors danced to this changüí.
With a pig roasted on the spit and an earthen dance floor [covered with *guano* (dried manure)]
Drinking rum in the morning and a changüí that did not have a set time to end.
Refrain: In the morning I'll leave, when it's dawn I'm leaving.

Finally, *Que rico es el changüí*, by Pipi and his Estrellas Campesinas (Country Stars), simply sings the praises of changüí and encourages the listeners to enjoy themselves:

Ya llegó la juventud
Ahora si vamos a gozar
Con el ritmo de changüí
Y su coro familiar
Montuno: Ay Caballero, ¡que rico es el changüí!

Here come the young people
Now, yes it's time to enjoy
With the changüí rhythm
And its familiar choral refrain
Refrain: Oh sir, how great this changüí is!

This grouping of songs demonstrates why changüí should be viewed alongside other Cuban musical genres such as rumba and son that are conducive to partying and that also ask their listeners to enjoy the music.

1) Musicians and Their Exploits

Musicians and their activities are the focus of many changüí songs. *Latamblé tocando el tres* (Latamblé playing the tres) epitomizes this song type. Written by the prolific composer, Hermenegildo Torres González, a.k.a. Ido Torres (b. April 13, 1932), it is a song that most locals know by its refrain, *La rumba está buena* (the party is good).[4]

Hoy yo les quiero cantar
Porque la rumba está buena. (2x)

[4] Recorded by a who's who of Puerto Rican musicians, arrangers, and composers, this song was featured on the album, *Descarga Boricua, ¡Ésta, Sí Va!*, TierrazoTH15A/B. (1993). Torres was never given credit or compensation.

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Hoy quiero cantar,
Hoy quiero bailar,
Hoy quiero tomar,
Porque la rumba está buena. (2x)

Latamblé tocando el tres,
Olivares en la marímbula.
El guayo toca Cambrón,
Las maracas Pedro Speck,
Taveras con los bongoes
Hoy se siente repicar ¿por qué?
Porque la rumba está buena
Montuno: Vamos a parrandear, porque la rumba está buena.

Today I would like to sing to you,
Because the party is good.
Today I want to sing,
Today I want to dance,
Today I want to drink,
Because the party is good.

[Reyes "Chito"] Latamblé is playing the tres,
[José "Nino" Olivares Pérez] Olivares on the marímbula,
[Carlos Boromeo Planche] Cambrón is playing the guayo [scraper]
Pedro Speck [Lescaille] is playing the maracas [gourd rattles],
[Andrés Fistó Cobás] Taveras with the bongos,
Today it feels hot, why?
Because the party is good.
Refrain: Let's party, because the party is good.

This song has become the 'calling card' of the Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. Although, Olivares and Taveras are the only remaining members of the group who are named in this song, it is still performed frequently and was chosen as the required piece at the 2000 changüí tres competition, further indicating the multiple functions and durability of changüí songs. The longer-than-normal phrases and highly sophisticated melodic/rhythmic setting of the text are typical of Ido Torres' beautiful style of writing.

Competition between musicians is central to the changüí genre; Chapter 8 of this dissertation is devoted exclusively to the annual state-sponsored musical competitions for

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changüí composers, musicians, and dancers. For more than 100 years prior to the introduction of these competitions in the 1990s, musicians competed for respect and reputation rather than monetary prizes. Judges for these battles were dancing partygoers and other musicians. As the following examples indicate, competition takes many forms. It is appropriate to begin the discussion with examples of songs that detail the exploits and showdowns between the legendary musicians of the past.

I first heard *La rumba de Mosqueda* (Mosqueda's rumba) at Nino Olivares' house on December 20, 1998. Julian Valier played it when I asked him if he could play me an old changüí by any of the great treseros from the legendary past. As Julian played the song he would pause, providing commentary regarding the protagonists, in this case, Mosqueda and his rival Corales.[5]

No me llores (5x)
Siempre he sabido que tú y Corales,
Han tratado la rumba de Mosqueda.
Por eso yo siempre voy fuera,
Porque con mi tono yo no tengo igual
Corales tuvo gobernara en Santiago
Y Mosqueda mundial en los llanos esta.
Montuno: No pierdas tus inspiraciones, siempre seré Mosqueda.

Don't cry to me . . .
I always knew that you and Corales,
Had tried Mosqueda's rumba (tune).
For this reason I will always go out,
Because with my melody I have no equal.
Corales you ruled in Santiago,
but Mosqueda will be in the valleys worldwide.
Refrain: You won't lose your improvisations, there will always be Mosqueda.

---

[5] Juan Gualberto Vichí Guibert, a.k.a. "Bebe" sang me a variant of this song on August 11, 1999.

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Interestingly, Julian did not indicate who the "*tú*" was in the line, "*tú y Corales*". Was he another *tresero* vying for the title of *tresero mayor* (best tres player)? Julian learned this intricate song from his father, Lorenzo Valier, Mosqueda's contemporary. Few musicians perform this song today.

From a musical standpoint, this is a very complex song, far more so than the vast majority of current changüí songs. Note choices, melodic range, and the rhythm of the phrases clearly indicate that this song was written by a tres player, rather than by a singer away from his or her instrument. Whether or not it was improvised in its entirety is impossible to determine, but its conception is impressive. The few songs that I have been able to find about Mosqueda, or those attributed to him, seem to share a competitive tone of language. The territorial claims laid out in this song are similar to the language found in *Fiesta en Cecilia* and *Mayumbero.*

Mayumbero is another song about, and generally attributed to, Mosqueda. Due to mistranscription and subsequent mistranslation, Dita Sullivan confuses the meaning of this song in her liner notes for track 8 on Traditional Crossroads CD 4290. She writes:

> This invocatory chant is a mambo-- the original meaning of that Bantu word. It is an aspect of the syncretic religion *palo monte*, similar to the Yoruba-based *santería*. The song is about power and possession, in which the singer inspired by the deity Changó… is announcing the multifaceted aspects of the divinity.[6]

This explanation is a convoluted fabrication, because as noted earlier, changüí is a self-referencing genre in which people from the past and their achievements are kept alive in song. Mosqueda was one of the great tres players from the turn of the century and this

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[6] Dita Sullivan, Liner notes to *Changüí* (1999) Traditional Crossroads CD 4290, 7. The most serious criticisms of Sullivan's liner notes are the absence of composer credits for

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song was meant to tell people not to mess around with him. The choral refrain "*Túmbame ahora*" is not a *mambo* but a *montuno*, the repeated musical phrase that forms the basis of all changüí songs. In mentioning terms associated with Afrocuban religions, Arsenio Martínez Eleno, the singer, is really doing what any singer would do in making *soneos* (vocal improvisations) for this song.

Díganle a los magnates
que dice Mosqueda
que si practican mayombe
yo soy mayombero (2x)
Montuno: Tumbame ahora.

Tell the big shots
That Mosqueda says
If they practice Palo Mayombe
I am a mayombero
Refrain: Try and knock me down, now.

The great changüí vocalist, Carlos Borromeo Planche a.k.a. "Cambrón" (1909-1999), also sang these verses with the chorus of the following song, *La conferencia*. We will later see that Mosqueda also wrote love songs. Despite its relatively old age, many groups from different municipalities within Guantánamo frequently perform this song.

Written by Herminio Correoso, *La conferencia* details a party where two well-known treseros, Pedro Masó and Mosqueda, dueled to determine who was better. A third tresero, Juan Logát, judged them:

Cuando la conferencia
de Mosqueda y Pedro Masó, (2x)
no hubo humanidad que tuviera conciencia,
No hubo una humanidad de conciencia que hablara.
Entonces el pueblo pensó en esta ciencia
y delegó en Juan Logát (2x)

---

songs whose authorship is well known. When present the composer credits are largely incorrect.

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para que fuera el juez.
Si a mi me ponen de juez, (2x)
para que viera la disputa de los dos.
Montuno: Juan Logát, pide que no muera.

At the showdown
between Mosqueda and Pedro Masó, (2x)
there was no one present with common sense,
There was no one present with common sense who could speak.
So the people thought about this science
and they delegated Juan Logát
to be the judge.
They made me the judge,
to resolve their dispute.
Refrain: Juan Logát, don't die.

This song is unique in its use of official-sounding and scientific language. The author's literary penchant renders a straightforward setting, the cutting session between two musicians, into a major historical event taking on supernatural proportions. The most delightful part of the song is how the "dispute" between the two treseros ultimately takes a back seat to the audience's request that the judge, Juan Logát, not die. Thus, it is Logát who wins the public's admiration, instead of Masó or Mosqueda.

Not much else is known about Masó, Mosqueda, Julio Nuñez, and other treseros, as they are believed to have passed away sometime in the 1930s or 1940s. According to Ramón Gómez Blanco, Pedro Speck stated that Pedro Masó "*era un cojo*" (was crippled) and walked around with a crutch. In 1999, Emeterio Epifanio Faure Michel (b.1914), a bass player, *marímbula* player, guitarist, cane worker, and train worker gave me more information about these legendary treseros, who "had their fame" (*tenian su fama*).[7]

[7] Emeterio Epifanio Faure Michel, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 11 August 1999.

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Epifanio described Mosqueda as "*un negro grueso... [y] prieto*" (fat and dark) who was also a cane worker. Mosqueda died in the area of the sugar *central*, Romelié, in the municipality of Manuel Tames. His wife was named Maria Lajigal. When asked about Mosqueda's alleged involvement with *palo monte*, Epifanio laughed as he told how he and Mosqueda were once at a *palo monte* gathering in Guayacán and Mosqueda got scared.[8]

Epifanio described Julio Nuñez as "*un negro colorao, medio gambado*" (a red Negro, half-bowlegged) and a good person who worked as a train conductor. And he corroborated Speck's description of Masó: he was injured in a *grúa* (crane) accident. Epifanio and his wife, Émerida Jay (the only daughter of Agripina Jay a.k.a. "*La Negra con pelo*" [the negress with straight hair]) also knew Pedro Masó's sister, Fabiana. Masó also played in Romelié. According to Epifanio, Masó played in front of the baseball field at Romelié on the day that Mosqueda died. This would indicate that while these men competed with another, they ultimately respected one another.

In 1983, Danilo Orozco recorded a song about Pedro Masó that appears on the CD *Antología integral del son* (1999), Virgin 8485622.[9] Performed by Orozco's elderly informant Catalina, the matriarch of the Valera-Miranda family who was alive during the 1895-1898 War of Independence, the text for *Canto y estribillo a Pedro Massó* (Song and Refrain for Pedro Massó) reads:[10]

Eran dos mujeres,

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[8] *Palo monte* is a syncretic religion of Congolese origin practiced in Cuba.
[9] This is a 1999 re-release of the seminal field recordings that Orozco made in 1983, first issued in Cuba by Egrem as LD286 and LD287.
[10] The Valera-Miranda family hails from the area near the Cauto River in Oriente. See Chapter 7 for further discussion of their music and Orozco's field recordings.

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las que preguntaban
Si no habían visto Pedro Masó por allí
La muerte te llama, Masó,
Que la muerte te llama, Masó,
Masó, Masó, Masó, Masó
Masó, Masó, Masó, Masó
Que la muerte te llama, Masó.

There were two women
Who had been asking
If Pedro Masó was seen about
Death is calling you, Masó
That death is calling you, Masó
Masó, Masó, Masó, Masó
Masó, Masó, Masó, Masó
That death is calling you, Masó.

The notes to this selection read, "Cantar con rasgos soneros alegórico a personaje popular (tresero). Catalina a capella; cierta aproximación al estilo rumbita" (allegorical song with son elements for a popular figure, a tres player. Catalina [sings it] acapella; approaches to some degree the *rumbita* [another subgenre, literally 'party'] style).[11] Here, one sees a common theme found in many genres of music: the musician encountering death in human form, and living to tell or sing about it. Notes from Inciarte's interview with Montalvo indicate that Montalvo wrote this song sometime around 1923.

Pedro Speck's *Vengan a bailar bailadores*, shows how traditional competitiveness is articulated in more recent times. The basic 'beef' in this song was between older changüiseros in the Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo and the younger *trovadores* in the Grupo Frontera.[12] *Frontera* was the first musical group that really

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[11] The *rumbita* appears to be one of Orozco's models or main types for transitional subgenres related to the Cuban son. See Chapter 7 for further discussion.

[12] Most of the information regarding this song comes from Jesús Alvarez, one of the few—if not the only—changüisero from Guantánamo living in the United States today. He is a composer and musician of the highest caliber who was one of the founding

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investigated and performed traditional musical genres of Guantánamo, such as changüí, kiribá, and nengón.[13] They would travel to Bayate and Baracoa to learn traditional genres and styles from elder musicians. Many of them had mentor relationships with older musicians in the *Casa de la trova* (house of trova or traditional song), which they made sure to mention. Inspired by the *nueva trova* (new song) movement, their arrangements and instrumentation included flutes, *pailas* (timbales), contrabass and other instruments not traditionally found in changüí ensembles. Originally made up of aficionados, the group eventually earned professional status and toured throughout Cuba, Latin America and Eastern-block Europe. In short, they were first group to perform changüí internationally.

On Saturday nights during the early 1980s, the city of Guantánamo had a street fair with a stage for musical performances, stone bleacher seating, as well as food and beverage stands. The event was officially called "Noche cultural en los escalones del boulevard" (cultural night in the bleachers of the boulevard).[14] Taking place on three blocks near the Parque Martí, on Aguilera Street, in the center of town, this event was more commonly known as *Boulevard*. According to Jesús, Pedro Speck and other musicians were jealous that these younger musicians were so well appreciated and enjoyed popularity with their non-traditional renditions of changüí songs that the elders had composed and/or performed. In addition, Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo was not

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members of Grupo Frontera and El Septeto Típico de Guantánamo (now Los Universales del Son).

[13] Jésus Álvarez, telephone conversation with author, New York, 4 April 2001.

[14] This event was ended at the end of the 1980s, by a neighbor's continual complaining. A similar event is still taking place on the main thoroughfare, Pedro A. Pérez. These Saturday nights are called *Noche guantanamera* (Guantánamo night).

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able to attract as many people to dance when they performed at *Boulevard*. Perhaps the scenario could be likened to a reverse "Buena Vista" phenomenon, younger musicians achieving fame and fortune while elder musicians were simultaneously falling out of favor—the norm for popular music in the United States. Sensing the encroachment on their territory, Pedro Speck penned his brilliant response to the situation.

Señores, los trovadores de mi pueblo se han dispuesto,
a imitar este changüí.
¿Pero que va, que va, que va?
Eso sí no puede ser.
Yo tengo mi tumbaíto en el ritmo de changüí.
Guía: Vengan a bailar bailadores.
Montuno: Vengan a bailar con mi changüí.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the trova performers in my town have been so inclined,
to imitate this changüí.
But wait a minute, what's going on?
This can't be.
I've got my little groove in the rhythm of changüí
Lead: Dancers, come and dance.
Refrain: Come and dance with my changüí.

Knowing the history surrounding the song allows the listener to hear the elders criticizing the youth in their efforts to modernize and interpret changüí.

Competition between treseros still exists, although today it takes on different forms, such as state-sponsored tres-playing contests. Such contests are relatively recent, and musicians continue to take shots at one another's playing through song at parties and other events. Julian Valier penned *Respétame mi tocar*, which addresses one of his rivals, Panchín:

Respétame mi tocar y no te pongas a criticar, Panchín.
Tú sabes que con las cuerdas tú no me puedes inmitar.
Baja Panchito, no tengas pena, ven a Yateras para parandear.
Aquí tenemos a Valier, hay Yú.

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Hacen en las cuerdas lo que tú no eres capaz.
Cuando el baile de la güira, cuando tú llegaste no me viste a mi.
Empesaste con el tono de Logát.
Y luego entonces, aquí soy yo ya yo no puedo ni soportar.
Pero Panchito tú eres conciente y tú me tienes que respetar.
Guía: Panchito no seas bobo, baja los llanos a ver changüí.
Montuno 1: Panchito no tengas pena baja a Yateras a ver changüí.
Montuno 2: Yo soy peligroso en la rumba.

Respect my playing and don't criticize me, Panchín.
You know that when it comes to strings you can't imitate me.
Come down, Panchito, don't be ashamed, come to Yateras to party.
Here we have Valier and Yú.
They do with the strings what you are incapable of doing.
At the dance of la güira, when you arrived you didn't see me.
You started with Logat's tune.
And anyway later I'm still here and I won't stand for this anymore.
But Panchito you are conscientious and had better respect me.
Lead: Panchito, don't be a fool, come down to Yateras to see the real changüí.
Refrain 1: Panchito, don't be ashamed, come down to Yateras to see the real changüí.
Refrain 2: I am dangerous in the rumba.

This song is similar to *La rumba de Mosqueda* in its complexity and conception. Knowing that Julian wrote this song supports the notion that melodic complexity is generally associated with authorship by a tresero. In this case, the song is not old per se, yet it has an older, Mosqueda-era quality. In addition, the language is very personal and direct, issuing a clear challenge to Julian's rival. To my knowledge Julian's group, Los Seguidores de Changüí, only performs this song.

Competition also exists between singers, as exemplified by Julian Brack, lead vocalist and guayo player for Bongó Caliente (Hot Bongó), a group from the Manuel Tames municipality. His song *Ya llegó Julian,* is a *regina* (a repeated choral refrain without a verse or just two lines of a repeated verse) which proclaims his greatness throughout the region:

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Ya llegó Julian con su ritmo de changüí
Viene matando canaya
de San Antonio hasta Maysí.

Here comes Julian with his changüí rhythm
He's killing all the riffraff.
From San Antonio all the way to Maysí.

Often changüís with verses will become *reginas* in party settings and singers will challenge one another. In these instances, the singers could add *coplas* (four-line verses) or *décimas* (ten-line verses, each line consisting of eight syllables).[15]

On December 20, 1998, I witnessed a *controversia* (vocal challenge) between two changüí singers in which *décimas* figured prominently. The occasion for the musical gathering was a birthday party in the San Justo neighborhood of Guantánamo. Being that the social setting was a party, and numerous singers and musicians were present, after a few songs were sung following the traditional format, two heavyweight singers began an informal duel. For much of the eight-hour party, *décimas* and *coplas* were sung during the *montuno* section of changüís, turning them into *reginas*.[16] The choral refrain for this particular *controversia* is "*Cuando estan de copas, siempre dicen ay caray*" (when people are drinking, everyone says "oh shit"). As previously noted, vocal *controversias* are mostly absent from staged performances, as a less formal and intimate party environment

[15] Chapter 5 discusses related variants of changüí that use this format, such as *nengón*, *kiribá*, and *contrapá*. In short, they are opportunities for vocal improvisation. While *nengón* and *kiribá* are also heard at parties, *reginas* are more popular, because they offer more opportunities for everyone present to get involved. Involvement could mean participating in a vocal duel, singing in the chorus, or just providing approval or disapproval by being an active listener.

[16] Décimas are most commonly associated with punto guajiro and variants of música campesina; despite its Hispanic origins, the practice of improvising décimas is often used in rumba although less frequently in son. For more on the use of décima in rumba see Pasmanick, 252-277.

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is more conducive for long verbal jousting. The following *décimas* and *coplas* were sung by one of the current lead singers in the Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, José Andrés Rodriguez. He was singing in a competitive, yet gentlemanly, tone to the venerated changüí singer Carlos Borromeo Planche "Cambrón," a man some forty years his senior. It took some prodding for the partygoers to get Cambrón to stand up and 'defend' himself. I have indicated the rhyme schemes of the improvisations with bold letters making it is easy to see that both singers often exceed ten lines by combining décimas and coplas:

José Andrés Rodriguez

Ponme la "m" a Cambrón	**a**
Sino dice un disparate (2)	**b**
y tú se lo pronunciaste	**b**
y decimos de corazón	**a**
Cambrón rima con carbón	**a**
y rima con muchas cosas	**c**
y cosa rima con sopla	**c**
que la ... donde vivo	**d**
cuando un mensaje recibo	**d**
de la gente del changüí	**e**
urgente yo estoy aqui	**e**
porque del changüí yo vivo.	**d**

Yo no toco con violín	**a**
pero yo toco con tres (2)	**b**
y a ustedes le diré	**b**
que saludo a Benjamín.	**a**

Cambrón:

Ye ye rumbero	
Yo soy rumbero	
Yo soy el rumbero Carlitos	**a**
que me dicen Cambrón	**b**
Yo soy el Carlitos	**a**
al que me nombran Cambrón	**b**
negro que verso bonito	**a**
y con mucha entonación	**b**
Oye no me acuse que no corro	**a**

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Te juro que yo soy un hombre	b
y antes de manchar mi nombre	b
Voy a la carcel socorro	a
El público no se asombre	b
por lo que voy a decir	c
Yo he sabido compartir	c
siempre sin formar alarde	d
Antes de yo ser cobarde	d
Prefiero mil veces morir, p'alla	c

José Andrés Rodriguez:
Put the *m* in Cambrón
Otherwise it says a silly thing[17]
And you pronounced it
And we said it with heart
Cambrón rhymes with carbon
And it rhymes with many things
Things rhymes with blows
that the ... where I live
When I received the message
from the changüí people
urgent, I am here
Because I live from changüí.

I don't play with the violin
but I play with tres
and to you I say
that I say hello to Benjamin [Lapidus].

Cambrón:
Yeah, rumbero
I am a rumbero
I am Carlitos, the rumbero
They call me Cambrón
I am Carlitos
The one they call Cambrón.
Black man, what beautiful verse
And with great intonation
Listen, don't say I can't run
I swear to you that I am a man
And before you stain my name
I'll go to jail, help!
The audience will not be surprised

[17] This is a play on words: without the *m* the word becomes *cabrón* (asshole).

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By what I'm going to say
I have always known how to share
Without showing off
And before I'll be a coward
I prefer to die 1000 times, so there.

As previously noted, Carlos Borromeo Planche "Cambrón" (1910-1999) was one of the greatest changüí singers. He often repeated his verses, with the result that many became stock licks for other vocal improvisers. Here are two more of Cambrón's oft-quoted verses:

Yo mismo soy el Carlito,
al que me nombran Cambrón
Negro, que verso bonito
Y con mucha entonación
Atento mi versación
Un indiana me decía
Ten cuidado, guajacón
Hay un sábalo en corría.

Myself, I am Carlito
The one they call Cambrón
Negro, what beautiful verses
And with great intonation
Listen to my verses
An *indiana* told me
Be careful *guajacón*,
There's a *sábalo* in pursuit.[18]

Hace tres días con hoy
que yo vengo cumbanchando
si me cuidan incomodando
cojo el caballo y me voy.

It's been three days counting today
that I've been partying
If they treat me poorly
I'll take my horse and leave.

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[18] *Indiana*, *guajacón*, and *sabálo* are species of fish.

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Musicians are often eulogized in *homenajes* (homages). Songs about legendary changüiseros appear during changüí songwriting competitions, but once they have been entered into competition, they often appear on records and in a given group's performing repertoire. Although some of these songs will be discussed in Chapter 6, the following songs epitomize the *homenaje*.

Clave del changüí (Key to changüí), Ariel Daudinot Brooks

No se olviden changüiseros nuestro espíritu no ha muerto.
Aquí estamos en la gloria cumbanchando y parrandiando.
Chito, Cambrón, Capullo y Mongolo somos clave del changüí.
El propio Dios nos nombró la clave y nos bautizó aquí.
Ahora en el cielo este changüí por Dios que no va morir.

Montuno 1: Para tocar el tres, Chito;
Para cantar, Cambrón;
Pa' tocar bongó, Mongolo;
Y para bailarlo, Capullo.

Montuno 2: Somos la clave del changüí

Guías de Montuno 1:
1. Dice Cambrón que su canto se escucha en el mas allá
que no le teme a la muerte y que nunca morirá.
2. Chito Latamblé allá en la gloria sigue tocando changüí
pa' que lo sepa la gente el changüí no va morir.
3. Mongolo tocó en la gloria con su bongó natural
y los ángeles del cielo se pusieron a bailar.
4. Capullo gran bailador en su vida material
sigue bailando en la gloria este ritmo sin igual.

Changüiseros, don't forget us, our spirit is not dead.
Here we are in heaven, partying and having a great time.
Chito, Cambrón, Capullo y Mongolo we are key to changüí.
G-d himself named us the key and baptized us here.
Now in the sky, this changüí, for G-d does not want it to die.

Refrain 1: To play the tres, Chito;
To sing, Cambrón;
To play bongo, Mongolo [Miguel Quintana];
And to dance it, Capullo.

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Refrain 2: We are the key to changüí

Leads for Refrain 1:
1. Cambrón says that his song is heard on the other side
Don't be afraid of death and he will never die.
2. Chito Latamblé there in heaven continues to play changüí
so that people know changüí will not die.
3. Mongolo played in heaven with his natural bongo,
and the angels of the sky started to dance.
4. Capullo, great dancer in his material life,
in heaven [he] continues dancing to this rhythm without equal.

This song remembers four members of the Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. In his early 30s, Brooks is a young changüí singer and percussionist interested in both traditional changüí and contemporary renditions of the genre. The imagery suggests that changüí is so special that it must be performed for the angels by these greats in the afterlife. The theme of musicians playing in the heavens appears in vocal improvisations in many Latin American genres.

Another song, *Homenaje para ellos* (Homage for them) by Andrés Fistó Cobas, a.k.a. Taveras, speaks of other departed changüiseros who have escaped the history books, such as Primitivo Pons a.k.a. *Cuatro Filos* (four knives), José, Herminio Correoso, Pípi, Chito Latamblé and Titíco:

¿Qué comentario? (2x)
En El Guaso se corrió, que en diciembre el festival (2x)
Cuatro Filos en el fanguito, en Las Sidras está José (2x)
Pero corrió eso en ... descargando con Pipi (2x)
Y en la loma del chivo está Latamblé (2x)
Y Titico en el caribe, Guaso está de fiesta (2x)
Montuno: Ay qué bueno traigo homenjae para ellos

What commentary?
In the Guaso [Guantánamo] it happened that the festival in December
Four Knives in the Fanguito [neighborhood], José is in Las Sidras
But it happened that ... was jamming with Pipi

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Latamblé is in the Loma del Chivo [neighborhood]
And Titico in Caribe [neighborhood], Guaso is partying
Refrain: Oh how good, I pay them homage

El 17 de enero by Antonio Cisneros, a.k.a. Ñico Ya, is another *homenaje* for the great dancer and baseball player Mariano Hodelín, a.k.a. Capullo, who was the male dance partner in Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo before Cisneros:

El diecisiete de enero de un sonero me acordé (2x)
Yo cogí, me levanté y este changüí le saqué (2x)
A él le llamaba Mariano y de apellido Hodelín (2x)
El changüí siempre bailó, hasta que llegó a su fin (2x)
Montuno 1: Fue pelotero, fue changüisero y en los dos se destacó
Montuno 2: Gloria a Capullo.

The 17 of January, I remembered a sonero
I got it, I woke up and I came up with this changüí for him.
He was called Mariano and his last name was Hodelín
He always danced changüí until he reached his end.
Refrain 1: He was a baseball player and changüisero and distinguished himself in both.
Refrain 2: Glory to Capullo

Angel Rubio, a founding member of Grupo Frontera, wrote Un homenaje. This song was dedicated to Rubio's teacher, Chito Latamblé:

No se asuste si mi rumba de expresión tradicional (2x)
Cargadita de fuerza, un homenaje quiera dar (2x)
Le cantaré a usted, con todo el corazón
Porque mi rumba es, porque mi rumba es lo que ayer me enseño
Montuno: Un homenaje para Latamblé, un homenaje.

Don't get scared if my rumba of traditional expression
Loaded with force, wants to give homage
I sing to you, with all of the heart
Because my rumba is, because my rumba is what it taught me yesterday
Refrain: An homage to [Chito] Latamblé, an homage.

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2) Attributes of the Genre

Not everyone in Guantánamo enjoys changüí. There are many songs that seek to defend the genre and emphasize the difficulty of mastering it, while pointing out that everyone still dances to it, despite their complaints. Rácifo Duran's *Güitito Chuii Chuii* is addressed to those people who dislike the old-style changüí, which he sees as extremely Cuban. Using the phrase *Güititío Chuii Chuii*, the local form of sticking one's tongue out at something, Durán makes his case[19]:

No me importa que critican mi changüí tradicional,
Eso lo traigo en la sangre porque yo soy cubano. (2x)
Güititío chuii chuii te lo decía, que rico changüí de antaño eso volvía (2x)
Montuno: Güititío chuii chuii, todos bailan mi changüí.

It doesn't matter that they criticize my traditional changüí
I carry it in my veins because I am Cuban
Nah nah [cf. taunting], I told you, how great is the old changüí, it will return
Refrain: Nah nah [taunting], everyone dances to my changüí.

In this song, the author is clearly not bothered by those unfortunate naysayers who dislike changüí.

In *Rocío*, by Rácifo Duran and José Diaz Planes, the authors' intended audience was Eduardo Rocío, the best-known Disc Jockey in Cuba. His show, "*Un domingo con Rocío*" (A Sunday with Rocío) is aired every Sunday from 3-6pm. Groups from all over the island send him cassettes to play on his program:

Las agrupaciones de Cuba, siempre envían a Eduardo Rocío un mensaje musical (2x)
¿Y por qué yo no, no lo puedo hacer? ¿Y por qué yo no, no lo puedo hacer?
Yo quiero brindarle mi changüí tradicional para que Rocío lo escuche en la capital
Montuno: Para que Rocío lo escuche

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[19] According to Jésus Álvarez, *Güititío chuii chuii* can best be explained as "*que tu no sabes, tu no haces*" (you don't know, you don't do [anything]). *Tengo que reirme* and *Voy pa'lante* are two of his songs that address this same concept. Álvarez, 4 April 2001.

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The musical groups of Cuba always send a musical message to Eduardo Rocío
And why can't I, why can't I do it? And why can't I, why can't I do it?
I want to offer him my traditional changüí, so that Rocío will listen to it in the capital.
Refrain: So that Rocío listens to it.

This song clearly shows that local musicians express pride in their local genre. They feel that their local music, changüí, should also be heard in the capital and in the rest of the island.

Mi changüí es un tizón (My changüí is a burning log) by Rácifo Durán and José Diaz Planes is filled with images of dancers arguing and getting their come-uppance from the changüíseros:

En un salón que tocaban, bailadores discutaban (2x)
Como bailar este changüí que no sea son (2x)
Y de pronto se escuchó una voz que pregonaba
Changüí es un tizón prendido muy dificíl de apagar
Así dijo Pedro Speck cuando empezó a pregonar
Montuno: El changüí es un tizón que no la para cualquiera

In a hall where they were playing [music], dancers were arguing
How to dance to this changüí that isn't *son*.
And immediately a voice was heard that called out:
Changüí is a burning log that is very difficult to put out
This is what Pedro Speck said when he began to call out
Refrain: Changüí is a burning log that just anyone can put out.

Finally, in his song, *Hay un no se qué,* Andrés Fistó Cobas, a.k.a. Taveras, proudly claims that his bongó and its playing technique are difficult to learn. Nevertheless it 'speaks' and 'says' things that are conducive to partying:

Hay un no se qué, Yo no se por qué (2x)
La gente estan comentando cuando escuchan mi bongó, Yo no se por qué(2x)
Traigo un bongó de monte adentro, No es muy fácil de aprender(2x)
Que dice cosas maravillosas para cumbanchar
Montuno: este bongó

There's an 'I don't know what,' I don't know why.

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People are commenting when they listen to my bongó, I don't know why.
I bring a bongó from up in the mountains, it's not easy to learn
It says things that are marvelous for partying.
Refrain: this bongó.

While song lyrics are self-referential, vocal improvisations, known as *soneos*, are even more so. One common *soneo* is "*Bongó bongó Taveras*" which refers to the *bongocero* for Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. In another instance, on the recording *Cuba in Washington*, the tres master Chito Latamblé (1918-1993) is not only mentioned in many of the songs but in the *soneos* as well. One example is "*Voy a parrandear, con Chito Latamblé*" (I'm going to party with Chito Latamblé). A successful vocal improviser will be sure to pepper his improvisations with the names of changüiseros, both living and deceased, as well as make references to parties, changüí instruments, and local geography.

Local History of Guantánamo

These songs are filled with local lore that is not recorded by other means. Quite often, the local audience will know the song, but not the story behind it. The humorous *El Changuí de Las Cidras* (The changüí of Las Cidras) is a song about a dead man in Las Cidras (a rural settlement near the city of Guantánamo in the Salvador municipality) who arose after he was declared dead:

En Las Cidras se ocurrió
que Bebe ha muerto.
En Las Cidras se ocurió
que Bebe se murió y Dios lo perdonó.
Ahora la gente comentan
que Bebe resucitó.
Montuno: Le cogiste miedo al fenómeno.

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It happened in Las Cidras
that Bebe had died.
It happened in Las Cidras
that Bebe died and G-d forgave him.
Now, people are talking about it
that Bebe has risen.
Refrain: You were frightened by the phenomenon.

I interviewed the author of this song, Juan Gualberto Vichí Guibert (b.1918), also known as Bebe. The story was that there was another man in Las Cidras, also named Bebe, who was killed. When the composer moved to the city of Guantánamo everyone was shocked when he said his name, because he was presumed to be dead. Bebe gave the song to Antonio Cisneros Arnaud "Ñico Ya," a member of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, and it has been performed for many years. Often the second line of the song is sung as "*que yo había muerto*" (that I had died). This song is still performed by numerous groups.

From Pipi (Eduardo Goulet Letapié) I learned another humorous 'death' song, written by the great *tresero*, Rogelio Lescaille, a.k.a. "Rogelio del monte" (Rogelio from the mountain).[20] Pipi explained that Rogelio used to drive around in a car that always backfired. He was known to take his tres with him in the car and one day, riffing off of the idea that the backfiring sounded like a gunshot, he was inspired to write a song about being fatally shot:

En el alto de la Clarita, Rogelio del monte

En el alto de la Clarita,
Ya Rogelio se mató.
Auxilio Felicidad,
Ya Rogelio se mató.
En eso llegó Sabala,
Por teléfono llamó.

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[20] Eduardo "Pípi" Goulet Letapié, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, December 2000.

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Auxilio Felicidad,
Ya Rogelio se mató.
Montuno: Rogelio, tu muerte fue fatal, oye fue fatal.

In the high part of la Clarita [a neighborhood in Yateras],
Now Rogelio has been killed.
Help Felicidad [the full name of Yateras is Felicidad de Yateras]
Now Rogelio has been killed.
In this came Sabala [an unknown individual]
Who called on the telephone
Help Felicidad
Now Rogelio has been killed.
Refrain: Rogelio, your death was fatal, listen it was fatal.

I have not heard this song performed by any group in Guantánamo; Pipi suggested that only his group has it in their repertoire.

In 1997, my tres teacher, Guillermo Mustelier, a.k.a. "Bule," taught me the following tune as an example of *un changüí primario* (a changüí from the first stage of the genre's development). The song *Tiene que trabajar pa' tu mujer* (You must work for your woman) by Julio Nuñez is based on an event that happened during the 1933 *zafra* (sugar harvest season) in Santa Rita, when Bule was a youngster. A party had been underway in the *batey* (cane field), where two of the cane workers, Pedro Masó and Julio Nuñez, had been playing. A police lieutenant who was friends with the two treseros sent another friend to tell them to get back to work:

Oye mi amigo Masó, dice Julio Nuñez
Que dice el teniente, que llegó la zafra
Y tiene que trabajar pa' su mujer.
Montuno: Tiene que trabajar pa' tu mujer, si no el teniente te lleva.

Listen, Masó, my friend, says Julio Nuñez
That the lieutenant says that the harvest is here
And you have to work for your wife
Refrain: You have to work for your wife, if not the lieutenant will take you away.

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When they were El Septeto Típico de Guantánamo until 1998, Los Universales Del Son would perform this song during folkloric stage presentations for foreigners, as an example of early changüí. The names in the song and the context described further establish its age.

The song, *Changüí en Yateras* (Changüí in Yateras), by the team of Rácifo Duran (tres) and José Diaz Planes (lyricist), details a party in the mountain valley of Felicidad de Yateras at Pipi's house:

Dice Cambrón que hay un changüí en Yateras (2x)
Ese changüí no lo pierdo yo
Me la llevé cuando Cambrón dijo, la casa del Pipi es la cuna del changüí
Me la llevé cuando me dijeron, que Pipi da changüí, café a changüí ron.
Montuno: Ese changüí no me lo pierde yo.

Cambrón says that there is a changüí in Yateras
This changüí, I won't miss it.
I went to it when Cambrón said, 'Pipi's house is the cradle of changüí'
I went when they told me that Pipi gives changüí, coffee and rum.
Refrain: I won't miss this changüí.

Rácifo Duran was an engaging and entertaining storyteller with a great sense of humor, who was affectionately known as *el guajiro* (the hick) for his disposition. In the following song, *Puché ten cuidado* (Puche, be careful), he tells the story of his friend Puché's birthday. Looking at the manuscript he gave to me, his personality leaps off the page:

Puché me mandó a buscar, y alguna gente se oponen.
Me dijeron que no fuera a tocarle mi changüí el día de su cumpleaño.
De pronto analizé detenidamente, y luego decidí a romperle la rutina
Y me fuí para el changüí
Montuno: Puché ten cuidado que mala es la humanidad (2x)
Regina 1: Hay gente que tiran piedra
Y pronto esconden las manos
Y siempre le echan culpa
A la pobre María Ramos

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Regina 2: Le da comida a la gente
Y le hacen como los gatos
Porque despues que se llenan
Ellos te volan los platos.

Puché sent for me and a few people were opposed to it
They said that I shouldn't go to play him my changüí on his birthday
Immediately, I thoroughly analyzed [the situation], and later I decided to break the routine.
And I went to the changüí
Refrain: Puché, be careful because humanity is bad.
Lead 1: There are people who throw stones
And immediately hide their hands
And always put the blame
On poor María Ramos
Lead 2: The give food to the people
And they behave like cats
Because after they fill themselves
They throw the plates at you.

This section concludes with the patriotism and regional pride expressed in *Inspiración de los pueblos* (Inspiration of the people) by Santiago Moreaux Jardines:

Señores, Señores, Señores, Señores (2x)
¿Verdad que todos los pueblos tienen su inspiración? (2x)
Y para gozar en Guantánamo el changüí, ritmo de maraca y son.[21]
Y para bailar en Guantánamo el changüí, ritmo de maraca y son.
Montuno 1: Para que bailen los pueblos, Guantánamo tiene su changüí
Montuno 2: Para que gocen los pueblos, Guantánamo tiene su changüí.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Isn't it true that every people has its inspiration?
And to enjoy changüí in Guantánamo, rhythm of maraca and son
And to dance changüí in Guantánamo, rhythm of maraca and son.
Refrain 1: So that the people dance, Guantánamo has its changüí
Refrain 2: So that the people enjoy, Guantánamo has its changüí

This song is relatively young (within the last twenty years) and remains in the current repertoire of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo.

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Love Songs

Love songs are common in changüí, and the best known changüí is arguably *El guararey de Pastora* (Pastora's thorn in her side). There is a substantial amount of controversy surrounding the true authorship of this song. Los Van Van, Ray Barreto, and many other groups have recorded the song indicating Pedro Speck as the author. Local lore, newspaper articles, and interviews conducted by Inciarte indicate that Roberto Bautá Segarra (1907-19??) wrote the song and bartered it either for household appliances or money with Pedro Speck. When the song became a national and international hit, Bautá took Speck to court over the copyright ownership. Eventually the case was decided in favor of Bautá, but most people still incorrectly assume it to be Speck's tune.

El guararey de Pastora, Roberto Bautá Segarra

Pastorita tiene guararey conmigo, yo no se por qué será (2x)
Yo nunca le hecho nada, ella es mi amiga del alma, la llevo en el corazón(2x)
Guía: Pastorita tiene,
Montuno: guararey

Pastorita has a bone to pick with me, I don't know why
I never did anything to her, she's my friend from my soul, I have her in my heart.
Lead: Pastorita has
Refrain: a bone to pick

Dita Sullivan incorrectly translates "*Pastorita tiene guararey conmigo*" as "Pastorita is sweet on me"; she believes that guararey derives from the word *guarapo* (sugar cane juice).[22] It appears that Pedro Speck brilliantly uses the imagery of the original song to allude to both the court ruling and the difficulty of the entire situation in his *Pastorita*. The minor key-setting adds to the drama:

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[21] "*Ritmo de tabaco y ron*" (rhythm of tabacco and rum) is often substituted.
[22] Dita Sullivan, 9.

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Me dicen que Pastorita tiene tremendo guararey (2x)
Pueden estar convencido de que conmigo no es (2x)
Si Pastorita tiene guararey yo no se con quién será,
Yo siempre le he tratado bien, con sinceridad
Guía: Ay no se abandona nunca.
Montuno: Pastorita.

They say that Pastorita is really peeved
You can be convinced that it's not with me
If Pastorita is upset I don't know with whom it could be
I have always treated her well, with sincerity
Lead: Oh, never abandon her
Refrain: Pastorita

Roberto Bautá Segarra wrote a good number of songs including *Pastora tu eres mayumbera, Mora, Rumbero, yo soy la candela, Todo los rumberos a parrandear, Rosa, te quiero a tí nada más, Quiero bailar con rubina,* and the following song, *Zoima*:

Zoima, que linda tú eres
Y por tu hermosura me dirijo a tí.
Hoy quiero cantarte (2x)
Esta melodía que te traigo aquí. (2x)
Guía: Te traigo un son sabroso
Montuno: Para tí, para tí yo traigo un son.

Zoima, how beautiful you are
And for your beauty I dedicate this to you.
Today I want to sing to you
This melody that I bring you here.
Lead: I sing a tasty *son*
Refrain: For you, for you I play a *son.*

Although none of his songs was as popular as *El guararey de Pastora,* he was a well-respected tresero. Further establishing his importance, Inciarte's notes contain five pages of an interview with him where he discusses his involvement with changüí starting in 1916.

Pipi sang me Juan Logát's *Mamía* and told me the song's story on Dec. 8, 2000. Logát was in love with a girl named Mamía, and he was looking for a way to talk to her.

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As there were no fixed musical groups at the time, when a changüí began, one person would bring the tres, another the maracas, and so on until there was a group of musicians. Thus, Logát figured that his best forum to address Mamía would be through the music at a party. He began to play and soon other musicians joined him and a fiesta ensued:

Estaba yo refrescando una curda
Cogí una boca sin brava silencio tu oído (2x)
Y aquella palabra dijo
Pero Logát de mi alma, vuelve y toca la rumba (2x)
Guía: Mamía, tu amor
Montuno: mató a Logát

There I was nursing my hangover
I found a word that would reach your ear
And that word said
How Logát of my soul, come back and play the rumba
Lead: Mamía, your love
Montuno: killed Logát

The song *San Antonio* by Mosqueda, is another love song, but it takes on overtones of local pride during the vocal improvisations when the lead vocalist successively names other zones within the region:

En San Antonio hay una mora (2x)
Que si me llega a querer te juro que me la llevo
Para Santiago de Cuba
Para a mi pueblo conocer
Montuno: Ay Que Linda Mujer.
Guía: San Antonio… Manuel Tames… Baracoa…

In San Antonio there is a dark woman
And if she likes me I swear that I will take her
To Santiago de Cuba
So that she knows my town
Refrain: Wow, what a beautiful woman
0: San Antonio… Manuel Tames… Baracoa…

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Political Changüís

There are very few changüí songs with political themes. I have culled the following from five visits to Guantánamo and reviewing available recordings. Cambrón, Julian Valier, Nino Olivares, and Ñico Ya sang this song for me on December 20, 1998 at Nino's house:

Viva mi Cuba,
Maceo, Moncada, Fidel y Martí.
Gloria al general Rabí,
Y aquellos patriotas que dieron la vida por este pais.
Guía: Fuiste el heredero de Martí, salvaste la patria cubana.
Montuno: Fuiste el heredero de Martí gloria por la patria.

Title and composer unknown by the author at this time.

Long live my Cuba,
Maceo, Moncada, Fidel and Martí
Glory to General [Jésus] Rabí
And those patriots who gave their lives for this country.
Lead: You were the messenger of Martí, you saved the Cuban homeland.
Refrain: You were the messenger of Martí, glory to Cuba.

The song lists five national heroes, but the one who receives his own line of text is the local hero, General Jesús Rabí, a general in the second war of independence from Spain. This is an example of how locals negotiate their connection and reading of history within the nationalist project: local historical figures can still figure prominently within the national history.

July 26th is the major official holiday for celebrating the anniversary of the Cuban revolution. The event coincides with carnival in Santiago de Cuba, but the government selects a different province every year for nationally televised speeches, as well as music and dance performances. Guantánamo was the site of the celebration in 1985. Pedro

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Speck penned the following song. It expresses the desire to have the celebration in Guantánamo and the efforts that locals are making to prepare for the occasion.

Guantánamo quiere un 26, Pedro Speck

Pero Guantánamo,
Se ha propuesto, señores,
A luchar para muy pronto ser sede de un ventiseis.
Cortando la caña, limpiando y sembrando
Y haciendo de todo para estar en ventiseis.
Guía: Guantánamo quiere
Montuno: un ventiseis

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Guantánamo has proposed
To work hard in order to be the site of the next 26th.
Cutting cane, cleaning and planting
And doing everything to be the site of the 26th.
Lead: Guantánamo wants
Refrain: a 26th

Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam also by Pedro Speck, expresses solidarity with other socialist countries. I have never heard this song performed in either a concert or informal setting, and it is no longer included in the Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo song list given to me by the group's representation in 1998.

Laos, Cambodia, y Vietnam (2x)
Vamos a defender a Angola (2x)
Que los cubanos de frente estarán (2x)
los pueblos deben de ser unidos
Amar a la patria y la libertad (2x)
Por eso Cuba es socialista
Porque ama a la patria y a la libertad.
Montuno: Nosotros estamos dispuestos a resistir y rechazar.

Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam
Let's defend Angola
That the Cubans will be at the front
The people have to be united
To love the fatherland and the liberty
For this reason Cuba is socialist

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Because [Cuba] loves the fatherland and liberty
Refrain: We are ready to resist and reject.

According to Pipi, Juan Logát wrote this song, but Julio Nuñez popularized it.

Like *San Antonio,* this song expresses national pride:

Mujeres de mi pais (Women of my country), also known as *Pretensiosa* (pretty), Juan Logát

No hay Americanas, no hay inglesas (2x)
No son pretensiosas, Logát
Como las mujeres buena mosas de mi pais
Guía: Pretensiosa
Montuno: mujer de mi pais.

There are no American women, no English women.
They're not pretty, Logát,
Like the beautiful women of my country
Lead: Pretty
Refrain: women of my country

Although local pride and history are reflected in these four songs, love of country is also important. A number of previously discussed songs imply that changüí is good by virtue of its Cubanness, further connecting the local experience to the national.

Conclusion

After considering the various themes of both rare and commonly performed changüí songs, it is easier to understand the extent to which the songs are self-referencing with lyrics discussing parties and the genre's protagonists, organology, and idiosyncrasies. Within this particular genre, one finds an infinite number of creative expressions. Through humor and poetic language, composers enhance the appeal of their songs, taking delight in extolling the genre's virtues by finding ways of likening the

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music to food and imagining it being appreciated in heaven. Good songs remain in the repertoire long after their protagonists or the parties they chronicle have passed.

Although the exploits of the oldest cluster of musicians such as Pedro Masó, Juan Logát, Mosqueda, Montalvo, María Guevara, and others may have lost meaning for most young people, the processes by which collective memory and historical consciousness are preserved and transmitted remain intact. Thus, the memories of the older cluster of musicians live on in song, but young people will have more personal involvement with the memories and exploits of the changüiseros who are now passing on such as Chito Latamblé, Capullo, Mongolo, Julian Valier, Cambrón, Pedro Speck, and Rácifo Durán, among others.

In many ways, songs about the oldest cluster of musicians serve a function that is similar to the First-Time stories of the Saramaka examined by Richard Price (1983). Changüí songs are sites where collective memory and historical consciousness are preserved and transmitted.

Anthropologists such as Connerton and Serematakis categorize song, dance, food and similar cultural practices as examples of embodied memory.[23] As in the Saramaka situation, where elders impart knowledge to younger seekers of first-time stories and knowledge, younger changüiseros learn many of these songs from their elders. Through songs about older clusters of musicians and events, aspiring changüiseros learn local musical and cultural history from their elders. In contrast to the Saramaka practice, there

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[23] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 72-94. C.Nadia Seremetakis, "The Memory of the Senses, Part I: Marks of the Transitory," In *The Senses Still: Material Culture and Memory in Modernity*. Edited by (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994): 4-7.

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is no specific time of day when this information is imparted, and the settings vary widely from informal parties to formal instrumental instruction in a master-apprentice relationship. Furthermore, in situations where older and younger musicians regularly play together, the younger musicians learn the repertoire of their elders.

But historical information is not merely transmitted from young to old, because younger musicians are adding their experiences and memories to the annals of changüí. Through *homenajes*, the achievements and accomplishments of master musicians are recorded in the collective memory of the changüí listening and dancing public. New changüí songs are constantly being written; thus, an already rich tradition continues to thrive and replenish itself. In this way, younger musicians and composers present their understanding of local history and culture, memory and historical consciousness.

Puerto Rican *plena* and Trinidadian *calypso* are often cited as Caribbean genres that address contemporary issues and historical events in song. When teaching, Cuban music specialists traditionally view the lyrics of son, rumba, and punto as the national genres that are most topical in nature; changüí, however, has not been analyzed from or framed within this perspective. Changüí songs provide the listener with rich historical information about local musical life in Guantánamo that is largely unknown to most scholars of Cuban music, residing in Cuba or elsewhere. These songs form the backbone of a vibrant, evolving, and dynamic musical tradition that chronicles local events and musicians in myriad ways. Through changüí songs, changüiseros ensure the preservation and transmission of local historical consciousness and collective memory for present and future generations regardless of who takes note of them from beyond the province. Many changüí songs were penned by laborers of African descent, who had the backbreaking

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task of working the cane fields of Oriente. For these men and women changüí was and still is a source of enjoyment and relaxation, allowing one to party and creatively express oneself.

An earlier document of topical lyrics in changüí is Natalio Galán's explanation of one canción that he regards as a changüí. *Señores no han visto* transcribed by Emilio Bacardi in his *Crónicas de Santiago* tells the story of a robbery that took place in the summer of 1879: a pig was stolen and hidden in a bedsheet, but the police surprised the thieves and caught them in the streets of Santiago de Cuba.[24]

Returning to the first song discussed, *El 21 de Mayo*, one sees how changüí lyrics personalize history: *Allí nos encontrábamos, ciertos tocadores y yo* (There we found certain players and myself). In this and countless songs, the author inserts him or herself within the event and that is the essence of changüí: a party and musical genre, where active participation is a must. The genre demands active, personal participation be it through composition, singing, dancing, engaging in musical duels, or playing an instrument. In this way, history is made and revealed every time changüí is performed. One need not be a musician or musicologist to be a part of the process.

[24] Galán, 308.

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Chapter 5: The Changüí Complex Inside and Outside of Guantánamo

Current Cuban musical scholarship categorizes changüí as a mere variant of son, relying mainly upon organological criteria. The dancers quoted in the lyrics to *Mi changüí es un tizón* would not agree, as they argue about 'how to dance to this changüí that isn't son' (*como bailar este changüí que no sea son*). In the case of changüí, genre classification based upon organological similarities is sloppy: changüí has so many variants and its own system of structured movement and expected behavior that it merits its own category. Divided into two parts, this chapter examines changüí as a complex of genres that includes many related variations heard both within and outside of the province of Guantánamo. Part 1 discusses variations that are heard within the province of Guantánamo, such as kiribá, nengón, and regina as well as more recent, less-known variations, each of them executed by the same group of instruments that performs changüí. The regional varieties of changüí, as performed in rural areas surrounding the city of Guantánamo, are compared with urban changüí. In Part 2 the influence of changüí on popular national genres such as son and salsa is discussed through an examination of three major musical personalities from Guantánamo: Luis "Lilí" Martínez Griñán, Herminio "El Diablo" García Wilson, and Elio Revé Matos. In addition, a look at commercial recordings by musicians whose work references changüí supports the argument for a separate classification of changüí as its own musical/social/dance complex with variations.

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Part 1: Antecedents and Related Variations of Changüí within Guantánamo

I first heard nengón when I purchased the CD, *¡Ahora Sí! Here Comes Changüí* (1995) Corazon Records CORA121. In the liner notes, Danilo Orozco explains nengón as a predecessor to changüí that is quite old. However, it was not until my first visit to Guantánamo in 1997, that I saw changüí, nengón, and other variants of the genre performed live. On this first trip, I attended formal performances by Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo at the Casa de la Trova, Kiribá y Nengón in Baracoa, Estrellas Campesinas in Felicidad de Yateras, and two formal performances by El Septeto Típico de Guantánamo at the Casa de Superación. In addition, I saw the Afro-Haitian folklore group Babúl perform changüí and its variants during their folkloric stage presentation, *Baron Samedi*. On subsequent trips, I was exposed to a variety of music that was related to changüí played by many groups in Baracoa, Yateras, and in the city of Guantánamo. The annual cultural festival features groups from throughout the province who perform nightly parties. Changüí and its variants were performed at these parties, which took place in the library, archives, Casa de la Trova, Casa de la Cultura, at other venues with stages, and in the streets. During my December 1998 and August 1999 trips I was able to attend some informal gatherings where changüí and its variants were performed in a party situation. I later acquired recordings by La Familia Valera-Miranda, Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, El Septeto Típico de Guantánamo (now Los Universales del Son), El Proyecto Yumurí and others that are filled with many of these variants. And on each trip I learned about more variants.

Through music lessons, attendance at formal and informal performances (both as an observer and a musician), and research I began to formulate answers to the questions of

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where these variations may have come from, who plays them, and why. Throughout my research, musicians have given differing explanations of these variations, but most often they are described as antecedents to changüí. For this reason the discussion begins with nengón.

Nengón

Guantanameros generally agree that the origin of the word nengón is a corruption of 'Negro' and the standard refrain "*cogelo pa' ti nengón*" is thought to be originally "*cogelo pa' mi negrón*" (carry it for me, big Negro). Argeliers León also noted a related phrase, "*esa regina hay que sacarlas por el mengón*" (That regina you have to take it to a méngon).[1]

Seeing nengón as "*la primera fuente de música campesina en el Sur de Oriente*" (the first source of rural music in the south of eastern Cuba)", Guantánamo-based researchers Ramón Gómez and María Josefa Sánchez write that there are two types of nengón: stable and with variation.[2] In both types, the tonic and dominant are accentuated, but in the latter the tres player has a more active part.

When playing *nengón*, the tres is usually tuned gG-bb-Ee, as opposed to the common gG-cc-Ee tuning used in changüí. The tablature for this pattern shows how less fingering is involved than when playing changüí; witness all of the 0s in Musical Example 5.1. Clearly, the tres tuning for nengón minimizes hand movement, and changüiseros and musicologists frequently point to the genre's ease of execution and more limited harmonic range as reasons why nengón predates changüí and kiribá. In

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[1]Argeliers Leon, *El paso de elementos por nuestro folklore* (La Habana: Cuadernos de Folklore, 1952), 7.

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their research on spatio-motor movement and music, John Baily and Peter Driver question whether an instrument shapes the music or is used because it fits the music. Ultimately they prefer the former of these two possibilities, "because it shows that new music may arise from new ways of moving in relation to the instrument."[3] Because the tuning for nengón differs by one half-step and the genre is slower and less syncopated than changüí, it seems clear that changüí might have offered "new ways of moving in relation to the instrument" without really changing the instrument's physical structure, just the tuning of one double course. The implications of this perspective could support the linear view of the son's development from nengón to kiribá and other regina styles, to changüí and ultimately son.

Nengón is not limited to the above melodic/rhythmic sequence nor the examples that Orozco recorded. In fact, many tres players perform nengón without retuning the second course of strings, but the refrain still follows the melodic line of the tres.[4] Jesús Álvarez and Ramón Gómez are among the musicians who write nengones that do not include the standard nengón refrain, "*cógelo pa' ti nengón.*" These nengones can be topical in nature, like changüí, and discuss national history, sports heroes who are Guantánamo natives, and popular idioms of Cuban speech, among other themes. The following song, *Dime nagüé* by Jésus Alvarez illustrate this point well:

¿Dime nagüé que bolá?

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[2] Ramón Gómez and María Josefa Sánchez, *Formas nengónicas de la música campesina en la provincia de Guantánamo* (Guantánamo: Ministerio de Cultura, Biblioteca Provincial José Policarpo Pineda, 1998), i.
[3] Baily and Driver, 58.
[4] Interestingly, when Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo recorded a nengón, it was performed with only two singers accompanied by a tres. It is clear from the recording that the tres was not retuned.

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Dicen los Guantanameros
Dicen los Guantanameros
¿Dime nagüé que bolá?

Say man, what's up?
This is what the people of Guantánamo say
This is what the people of Guantánamo say
Say man, what's up?

Closer to the time-marking pattern in son known as *martillo*, the nengón bongó pattern is constant; rhythmic fills, when present, are less frequent and complicated than those found in changüí. The nengón marímbula pattern is also distinct from that of changüí, yet the parts for the maracas and guayo are the same. Played slower than changüí, nengón has a more loping feel overall. Like changüí, nengón begins with the *llamada de montuno* and *ejecución colectiva* followed by the *canto de nengón* (main body of the song), a climax, and decrescendo. In contrast to its role in changüí, the tres never improvises in traditional nengón performance contexts, but the vocal line follows the tres line just as it does for changüí. Once the tres plays the llamada de montuno, the ejecución colectiva occurs in two stages: first, the bongó and marímbula enter on an anacrusis and, second, the guayo and maracas follow on the downbeat. Gómez and Sanchez write:

> In nengón, the main sung melody is initiated in two forms, on the downbeat or on an anacrusis, and it will depend on how the tres begins during the llamada al montuno. The soloist must pay careful attention, when about to add the copla with the choral refrain, to listen to the development of the displacement by the tres or he/she could get 'mounted' with the melody.[5]

[5] Gómez and Sánchez, *Formas nengónicas*, 8: "En el nengón el canto se inicia de dos formas, tética o anacrúcica y estará en dependencia de como da inicio el tres en la llamada al montuno. El solista en su improvisación tendrá muy presente a la hora de efectuar la copla con el coro escuchar el desarollo del desplazamiento del tres porque si no puede montarse con la melodía."

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In this context, getting 'mounted' means that the tres player's notion of síncopa is out of sync with the rest of the musicians. As a result, the beat gets turned around and all of the participants find it difficult to continue playing.

As in their previous writings on changüí and son, these authors have divided the chronological development of nengón into four *distintas generaciones* (distinct "generations," in other words phases of development) that reflect differences of instrumentation: First generation (nineteenth century) - *bajo en tierra* (ground harp), *tiple* (a small, triple-coursed guitar), guayo, bongó de monte and *quijada* (jawbone); Second generation (around 1900-1950) - *botíja* or *botijuela* (a clay jug that is blown into, and used as a bass) tres, guayo, bongó de monte, occasional clave; Third generation (around 1950s-1994) - marímbula, tres, guayo, bongó de monte, maracas; Fourth generation (starting in 1994) - contrabass, tres and guitar, guayo and guiro, bongos and timbales, maracas, clave, flute, and trumpet. This chronology is problematic, as we will see there are recorded versions of nengones, at least as early as 1951, with the fourth generation instrumentation.

According to research conducted in Baracoa by María Court, the tiple was originally performed in a strumming fashion, and the sound of the ground harp could be heard for great distances.[6] Gómez and Sánchez believe the replacement of the strummed tiple with the plucked tres to be one of the great transformations in the development of this genre that would ultimately bring about the development of related styles such as kiribá, regina, and changüí.

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The dance for nengón requires moving one's foot in a circle, and some regional dance specialists have explained this motion as mimetic, as if one were spreading coffee to dry. As changüí and nengón are found in rural coffee regions (Las Cídras, Yateras, etc.), this evidence might suggest that such a movement was dropped over time and is thus absent in changüí. As of this writing, that notion is still hypothetical.

Other Cuban musicologists see nengón differently than their counterparts in Guantánamo. During August and November of 1983, Danilo Orozco, a German-educated musicologist from Santiago de Cuba, recorded gatherings of the Familia Valera-Miranda musical group in San Luis, part of the Cauto River valley, an area to the west of Guantánamo in the Santiago de Cuba province. These field recordings and their accompanying notes were released in 1983 as *Antología integral del son: bases históricas* and consist mainly of nengón, regina, and similar 'subgenres,' such as rumbita. Today, the Familia Valera-Miranda musical group tours internationally and continues to perform and record many of the songs from the old repertoire that Orozco documented, albeit in a more modern style.[7] Orozco sees nengón and similar subgenres as a model with many submodels such as *nengón –manajú*, *nengón-serrano*, *nengón de cuenca del cauto*, and *nengón de Toa* among others.[8] Orozco lists some of the characteristics of nengón as follows: "[1] tendency toward rhythmic-metric instability or toward uncommon types of accentuation and segmentation; [2] rough mixture of Afro-Hispanic melodic traits; [3] approximate traits of punto guajiro; [4] obvious generative hand movements [presumably by the musicians] part of the rhythm; [5] clapping in time [presumably by the public] with the principal segmentation of the tres (on the beat and offbeat); tendency to not allow

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[6] The ground harp is made by digging a large hole in the ground, covering the hole with a leaf and attaching a string to the leaf that is tied above to a tree branch. The musician plucks the string and strikes the leaf in a rhythmic fashion.

[7] *Cuba: La Familia Valera-Miranda* (1997) Ocora/Radio France C57062.

[8] Danilo Orozco, Liner Notes. *Familia Valera-Miranda, Antología integral del son: bases históricas* EGREM LD-286/7 (1983), page 1, section 3.

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guidance by clave, or if present, secondarily; segments and micro-segments [or] 'shortenings' of the refrain (either over the verse or off of it: always in a contrast-climax function); moans, interjections and vocal 'draggings' [*arrastres*] in a contrast-climax function; versification with free mixture of regina-décima (or fragments), possible Hispanic archaisms and other aspects; neither did it lack anticolonial references"[9]. Additionally, Orozco cites the frequency of songs about birds, often used to discuss the Spanish colonial government and the importance of the *tumbandera* (ground harp).

Kiribá

After nengón, locals believe that *kiribá* is the next step in the evolution of the son. As defined by Gómez and Sánchez, *Kiribá* is based on a four-measure ostinato: the first two establish the sung choral refrain, and in the last two the singer improvises. The harmonic progression is I – V – V- I.[10] Kiribá is easier to execute than changüí. The tres pattern is almost always played at the third fret in order to exploit the open strings and this almost always means the key of Eb Major (see Musical Example 5.2). I am using the word *pattern* because the tres never improvises during the performance of kiribá. In common practice, singers take turns improvising coplas while just about every other instrument plays a supportive non-changing role. Musicians and researchers concur that kiribá is and was traditionally used to end a given changüí party or similar gathering. Some musicians say that the music for kiribá is mimetic of riding one's horse on the return trip from the fiesta. Today, kiribá is performed at any point during a party or folkloric stage presentation.

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[9] Idem.

[10] Ramón Gómez and María Josefa Sánchez, *Cronología tipológica del son en el alto oriente: influencias para su desarollo en otras zonas del país* (Guantánamo: Centro Provincial de la Música Luis (Lilí) Martinez Griñan, Ministerio de Cultura y Biblioteca Provincial José Policarpo Pineda, 1998), 4.

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The bongó pattern contributes to the overall galloping feel and stays to a recurring pattern with little room for embellishment. The marímbula pattern is almost the same as in nengón. The overall tempo is faster for all of the other instrumental parts. According to Jesús Álvarez, a similar genre exists in central Cuba whose refrain is "*rumbamba rumbamba*" and Pablo Moya knew it as such in his home municipality of Salvador.[11]

Composers such as Ramón Gómez Blanco and Ariel Daudinot Brooks continue to write kiribá songs that go beyond the standard refrain. In Dec. 2000, I heard Ariel's group perform a kiribá with the refrain "*kiribá de Baracoa*" instead of the traditional "*kiribá, kiribá*".

Regina

According to Gómez and Sánchez, *regina* is commonly known as *el Son Oriental* (son from Oriente).[12] These authors believe that it is the "embryonic musical form" which later became changüí, through the simple addition of *pasos de calle*. As in kiribá and nengón, there is traditionally no instrumental improvisation in the execution of a regina. Simply stated, reginas are repeated choral refrains. In current practice a regina will frequently appear in the midst of changüí performance. Changüí normally has a call-and-response section, called the *montuno*, which takes place after the *canto changüisero* (main body of the song). This is the section of the song where, as Peter Manuel suggests, the singer's improvisations would typically "consist of more flexible reiterations of

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[11] Jesus Álvarez, telephone conversation with author, New York, 21 May 2001.
[12] Gómez and Sánchez, *Cronología,* 5.

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vocalists' favorite phrases rather than truly spontaneous creations."[13] As seen in Chapter 6, changüís with verses often become *reginas* in party settings and singers will challenge one another. In these instances, the singers add *coplas* (four-line verses) or *décimas* (ten-line verses, each line consisting of eight syllables). What follows are some common *reginas*: [1]

Oye caramba ay caramba...
Listen, good heavens, Oh my gosh!

Cuando estan de copas
siempre dicen, ¡ay caray!
When people are drinking
everyone says, oh shit.

De mi corazón...
From my heart...
Te quita el dolor...
So that it takes your pain away

Por la mañana, por la mañana.
In the morning, in the morning.

Le meto entero.
I did it all the way.

Regina is the general term for these refrains, and they are commonly referred to as "*parranda callejera*" (street party) or "*bachata*" (party) as well.[14]

Many nengones, reginas, kiribás, and changüís were created in the mountains of Guantánamo, and they commemorate independence victories during both The Ten Years War (1868-1878) and The War of Independence (1895-98). Gómez and Sánchez write that "our mountain music became known through the independence struggle that liberated

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[13] Manuel, "Improvisation," 137.
[14] Carlos "Cambrón." Borromeo Planche, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 20 December 1998.

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and incorporated it within the national Cuban folklore; these territories were the first ones to dance to autochthonous mountain music when they were liberated."[15] Thus, for Gómez, Sánchez, and other musicians, these variations of changüí are historically important steps in the development of the Cuban son. This excerpt shows how local musical practices contributed to the development of national musical practices such as the son. For this reason, when groups like Los Universales del Son perform in folkloric stage situations they present nengón, kiribá, and other variations as archaic predecessors to changüí and son, not as simultaneously occurring musical practices. In less formal situations, performance of these variations serves quite different, more practical functions such as a means to end a party (kiribá) or to provide a respite from the faster tempos and rigorous requirements of changüí (nengón).

For Orozco, Alén, León, Linares, and others, nengón and kiribá are really variants of son and should be classified, along with changüí, as such, not as distinct genres. Their categorization rests mainly on organology. There is nothing inherently objectionable about this notion, but I would argue that changüí, nengón, and kiribá should be flagged as highly distinct from son by virtue of the systematized musical idiosyncrasies inherent to nengón and changüí, specifically the absence of the clave figure as a timeline to guide the ensemble, in addition to their associated dance forms that emphasize contratiempo and síncopa. Each genre has its own system of coordinated movements that restrict each instrument's actions in specific ways; son does not share the same system of coordinated

[15] Gómez and Sánchez, *Cronología*, 7: "que nuestra música montuna fue dándose a conocer a través de la lucha independentista quien fue liberándola e incorporándola al folklor nacional cubano, estos territorios fueron los primeros que después de ser liberados, bailaron la autóctona música montuna."

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movements with changüí, nengón, and kiribá. Furthermore, performers of nengón, kiribá, and changüí delight in discussing local phenomena. Strictly speaking, son has a different meaning for people beyond the province of Guantánamo and does not include nengón and kiribá: most Cubans have never heard of kiribá and nengón. Thus, it is misleading to throw all of these together under the rubric of son.[16]

Other Variants

In most cases, other variants exist independently of changüí and often they are just singular songs. However, these variants often have specific dances accompanying the music. Two dance specialists from Baracoa, Alexander Ochoa Sánchez and Teresa Rochet, performed and explained the following dances for a small audience during the annual cultural festival in December 1999. Besides nengón and kiribá, they performed *el carril, el cabaret* (in which a girl looks around to make sure her father is not around and sneaks out of her house to see a beau at a dance), *el aeroplano* (a dance that commemorates the first airplane flight over Baracoa c. 1920-1930 during which dancers spin around with their arms out and then move from side to side during the refrain), and *el bombocamera* (danced contratiempo during the refrain and with a *cumbia*-type move during the verses). Described as faster than kiribá, *la kiringa* is yet another variation that these specialists mention but do not describe.

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[16] Ramón Gómez told me that Cambrón considered changüí to be son, but when he performed he made clear distinctions and choices that differentiated son from changüí, kiribá, and nengón. Most other changüiseros refer to their music as changüí, not son.

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In his writings, Danilo Orozco identifies *el manajú* as a distinct subgenre, yet he never defines it. To this date I have had little success in finding out precisely what this genre is or was. Sitting down with a shoebox full of notes and transcriptions made by Rafael Inciarte, on December 17, 1998, José Cuenca and I asked Cambrón to sing us some of the subgenres, including *manajú*, that Inciarte had notated. Cambrón asserted that *el manajú* was a private affair not intended for youngsters to see or participate in. The adults would pull down the shades and party. On separate occasions, I interviewed other musicians in Cambrón's presence and my repeated questioning about *el manajú* was met with silence on the part of others as Cambrón chided me that he was the only one who was alive when *el manajú* was performed and that no one else knows about it so I should stop asking. Reviewing one videotape, the silence that overcomes the assembly seems to indicate that *el manajú* was not something that should be discussed with me. Looking through Inciarte's notes in December 2000, I found his transcriptions of *manajú, rompía*, and *jirivilla* (see Musical Examples 5.3 and 5.4, in Inciarte's own hand). In his notes, Inciarte classified the song *María Guevara* as a *jirivilla...mas movido* (literally 'jumpy,' another more lively style of changüí).

Three other variants worth mentioning include *mará*, *mayumbón*, and *contrapá*. The Havana-based Guantánamo folklore group, Banrrará, performs another regina-like subgenre, called *guanajá*. Along with his colleague "Machado," the prolific composer, Ido Torres, is known amongst musicians as the inventor of a genre called *mará*. It is essentially a call-and-response vocal form accompanied by percussion and executed in 6/8. Some musicians refer to it as "*una rumba*". Created by Ariel Daudinot Brooks, *mayumbón* falls somewhere between changüí and kiribá. The marímbula pattern is its

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main distinguishing characteristic. Finally, *contrapás* (from *contrapaso* or counterstep) is what Ramón Gómez characterizes as an older mountainous dance style in which the dancers dance in such a fashion as to appear off the beat. Jesús Álvarez refers to this as dancing *montado* (possessed and out of sync with the music).[17]

Regional Varieties of Changüí

During a formally organized changüí party on the night of Dec. 1, 2000, I had an interesting conversation with a poet, trained as a sociologist, named León. Interested in the ways that globalization can affect the expression of local musical practice, he suggested that changüí lyrics and music be analyzed and considered in light of each group's immediate surroundings. During the performance by one rurally based group, *Bongó Caliente*, he pointed out the fact that they sounded distinct because of where they came from, Manuel Tames. One could extend this discussion to include tuning and intonation as another group from outside of the city played with the tres so far out of tune that it was unbearable. The bongocero and musical director for Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, Taveras, turned to me at one point and said something like "*¿Qué tresero es este?*"(What kind of tres player is this?!?!). Even though I enjoyed the performance, I answered that his tres was indeed out of tune and suggested that the player should tune up. Implying that this it was beyond this particular tresero's capacity to tune his instrument, Taveras replied that you have to have an ear in order to accomplish that.

[17] Álvarez, 21 May 2001.

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These two exchanges confirmed some of the ways in which locals differentiate the many changüí groups that exist. City dwellers characterize rural changüí performers as less polished and criticize them for being out of tune. Similarly, rurally-based performers contend that urban changüiseros play too fast, all of the bongoceros sound the same, and that changüí really comes from the mountains of Yateras and other areas outside of the city. Interestingly, many urban changüiseros agree with the last of these points. Justo Kindelán, one of the founding members of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, stated that, "before, changüí here [in Guantánamo], for the most part was from the countryside."[18] Sometimes the differences between rural and urban locales are negligible, as in the case of San Justo, a neighborhood considered to be *el campo* (the country) even if it is part of the city. In other cases, people still reside in areas without electricity known as *zonas de silencio*. Changüí is enjoying a local boom of sorts and every year new groups of young and old musicians emerge. Most of these groups will be discussed within the context of state-sponsored competitions in Chapter 8. Officially classified as 'amateur' groups by the state musical bureaucracy, the following groups, from outside of the city, play and sound differently when compared to their urban counterparts.

Bongó Caliente is from the *municipio* (county) of Manuel Tames. Unlike their urban counterparts, the guayo player and lead singer plays short scrapes, accenting the downbeat. They frequently perform more regina-style songs. Marking the rural style, the tres player performs acoustically.

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[18] Justo Kindelán, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 12 Dec. 1998: "El changüí aquí mayormente antes era del campo."

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Another group I have seen in Guantánamo is Grupo Changüí 17 Mayo, which hails from the municipio of Salvador. This group is distinctive because it is the only group I have seen where the lead singer plays tres and sings at the same time. Interestingly, the lead singer/tresero sings in a high range, sometimes a bit sharp, similar to the lead singer in Cañambú from San Luís.

As seen in Chapter 3, Estrellas Campesinas is from Felicidad de Yateras the area most acknowledged as the home of changüí. They perform acoustically, but are no strangers to staged, amplified performance and recordings. Interestingly, the bongó player uses a *bongó de llave* (bongó with metal tuning lugs) and plays in a steadier *martillo* (hammer) style, although he still improvises. The lead singer, Pipi, prefers to use simpler more repetitive *inspiraciones* (lead vocal improvisations). The group plays reginas and changüí, most of which are older than usual, written by legendary musicians. Seeing the group one is struck by how the marímbula pattern differs from the one normally heard in the city. The overall effect of the group's swing sounds more like a triplet or 6/8 feel than cut-time or 2 feel. This is quite different from almost every changüí group I have heard.. Interestingly urban musicians are not in total agreement about the quality of Pipi's group. Bella told me that, "the real changüí, that I recognize, is that which is played at Pipi's house."[19] In contrast, Taveras described Pipi's group to me as follows, "this is son."[20]

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[19] Evelia "Bella" Noblet Colás, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 21 December 1998: "Pero el verdadero changüí que yo reconzco es que se toca en casa de Pipi."
[20] Andrés "Taveras" Fistó Cobas, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 17 December 1998: "Eso es son."

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I have only heard Changüí de la Maya on the 1995 CD, *¡Ahora Sí! Here Comes Changüí* Corazon Records CORA121. This group is from La Maya, an area to the immediate West of Guantánamo that is now part of the Santiago de Cuba province and every week they perform in the city of Santiago de Cuba at *La casa de las tradiciones*. Unlike any changüí group, the lead singer plays trumpet when not singing. Based on the recording, the group appears to mostly perform reginas.

Finally, Kiribá and Nengón are from El Güirito, an area in the Baracoa municipality. As their names indicate they perform kiribá and nengón, but add a guitar to the ensemble and substitute a wooden guiro for the metal guayo.

This brief description of groups from beyond the city limits should give the reader a sense that no two groups sound alike. Parameters such as lyrics, types of songs performed, instrumentation, and performance techniques are modified differently in each municipio by each group. Taking our friend. León's words into consideration, perhaps each group's audience has different expectations; clearly the musicians do.

Part 2: Variations of Changüí Outside of Guantánamo

As seen in Part 1, there are many variants of changüí within the province of Guantánamo. In most places in the world, individuals interested in national recognition need to do something different with local genres. We begin our discussion of changüí beyond Guantánamo with three brief portraits of individuals who achieved national recognition and their relationship to changüí: Luis "Lilí" Martínez Griñán, Herminio "El Diablo" García Wilson, and Elio Revé Matos. In addition, a look at the diffusion of commercial recordings by musicians whose work references changüí supports the

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argument for a separate classification of changüí as its own musical/social/dance complex with variations that exists beyond Guantánamo.

Luis "Lilí" Martínez Griñán: "*La Perla de Oriente*" (The Pearl of Oriente)

Born on August 19, 1915 in the city of Guantánamo, Luis Martínez Griñán a.k.a. Lilí, would go on to become possibly the most influential pianist in Cuban popular music with more than 118 compositions to his name as well as national commendations. Beginning his piano studies at an early age with his sister Ana Emilia, he advanced quickly and gravitated towards Chopin.[21] Influenced by local tres players and their music, Lilí's playing and songwriting audibly reflect local tres-based music. He often transferred tres patterns to the piano and is believed to be the first pianist to notate such patterns. Other innovations include the first son versions of Chopin's piano music, published as *Pianotaciones I & II.* As a laborer on the base, Lilí is alleged to have paid a co-worker to keep an eye out for him as he slipped into a nearby room to practice piano.

As a member of Corsino Calzado's *orquesta,* he performed on the naval base in 1935 and formed the first *conjunto* in Guantánamo, Los Campeones de Lilí Martinez, toward the end of 1937 or the beginning of 1938. Lilí's experience playing on the naval base in Guantánamo gave him a familiarity and facility with North American dance music. As an arranger, composer, and pianist he was most influential and innovative through his incorporation of jazz and other North American musical forms into the *conjunto* format. In 1940, Los Campeones de Lilí Martínez were contracted to perform

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[21] Lil Rodríguez S., "El montuno de Chopin: Luis Martínez Griñan, 'Lilí'," *Bailando en la casa del trompo* (Caracas: Euroamericana de Ediciones, 1997), 72.

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three times a day on the local radio station, CMKS. As he worked in *academias de baile* (dancing schools that featured prostitution) between 1943-45, word of his talent spread throughout Cuba. Around 1945, Lilí received a telegram from Arsenio Rodríguez asking him to join his band in Havana.

The sounds of Guantánamo in Lilí's accompaniment figures or 'comping' are evident in his recordings with trumpeter/bandleader Felix Chapottin and with Arsenio Rodríguez. Particularly striking is his use of nengón tres patterns in songs such as *Nicolás corrió* (see Musical Example 5.5), *Jumba* (Arsenio, April 3, 1951, RCA Victor 23-5405-B, and *Caminante y Laborí* (Arsenio, RCA Victor 23-5383-A, recorded March 6, 1951). The song *Jumba* is a nengón, and despite Arsenio's copyright, these last two songs appear to be collaborations between Lili and Arsenio.

Lilí's *Mi changüí son*, recorded by *Estrellas de Chocolate* in the late 1950s or early 1960s, appears most concerned with Guantánamo and changüí.[22] Important local musicians are named and the conditions for a traditional changüí party seem to be explained by a firsthand participant/observer:

> Ayyyyyyyyyyyy!
> Yo quiero contarte hermano una cosa que yo ví
> En Guantánamo una noche como se toca changüí
> El tres, el guiro y la tumba nunca paran de sonar
> A ver que caí de zumba
> Eso sí que es cumbanchar
> *Coro 1*: Vamos pa'l changüí mama , Vamos pa'l changüí mama .
> Un día en casa de Agrapina se encontraron Barceló
> Con … Juan Creagh hay otros allí mismo se formó
> La negra tuntun gainza empiezo a tocar el tres
> Era viernes de mañana y acabó dos dias despues
> *Coro 2*: Cuando yo vaya Guantánamo voy a gozar bailando changüí

[22] Estrellas de Chocolate, *Los inéditos 'en vivo'*. DC Productions CD 9205. Compact disc. n.d. [1950s].

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Coro 1: Vamos pa'l changüí mama, Vamos pa'l changüí mama . . .
Guía: A guarachar, vamos p'al changüí, mama.
Coro: Vamos pa'l changüí mama,
Guía: Con Latamblet me voy p'al changüí mama
Guía: Si tu no vienes, voy p'al changüí mama
Coro: Vamos pa'l changüí mama, Vamos pa'l changüí mama . . .

Hey!!!!!!!!!
I want to tell you brother about a thing I saw
In Guantánamo one night, how changüí is played
The tres, the guiro and the drum never stop sounding
I really got into it
This is how you party and get down
Refrain 1: Let's go to the changüí mama, Let's go to the changüí mama.
One day in Agrapina's [Jay] house they found Barceló
With ... Juan Creagh there are others and right there they started
The negress, Tuntun Gaínza, began to play the tres
It was Friday morning and it ended to days later.
Refrain 2: When I go to Guantánamo I am going to enjoy dancing changüí
Refrain 1: Let's go to the changüí mama, Let's go to the changüí mama...
Lead: Let's boogie down and let's go to the changüí, mama.
Refrain: Let's go to the changüí mama.
Lead: With Latamblé I'm going to the changüí mama...
Lead: Even if you don't come, I'm going to the changüí mama

Clearly reflecting Lilí's intimacy with his hometown's music and musicians, the lyrics and vocal improvisations name legendary changüiseros such as La negra con pelo, Tuntun Gainza, Chito Latamblé, and Juan Creagh. The bongó, piano, and tres parts and the "*a caballo*" (horselike walk) tempo are audibly rooted in nengón (see Musical Example 5.6).

Lilí's other songs reflect his Guantánamo roots: *Changüiseando*, *Cero guapos en Yateras* and *Alto Songo* (a town in the province). An intellectually oriented individual who spoke French and English, in 1952 Lili received a diploma in scientific crime

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detection from the Institute of Applied Science in Chicago, Illinois.[23] Dubbed *La perla de Oriente* (the pearl of Oriente), Lilí created a piano style that served as the foundation for many pianists both in Cuba and abroad, such as Papo Lucca, Eddie Palmieri, and Larry Harlow. His interest in Guantánamo's musical folklore is clearly heard in his piano playing and composing, and by extension, in the works of his countless imitators.

Herminio García Wilson: "El Diablo" (The Devil)

Renowned throughout Cuba during the first half of the twentieth century as a tresero, composer, and bandleader, Herminio García "El Diablo" Wilson (1904-1996) remains at the center of the authorship controversy for *Guantanamera*, Cuba's unofficial national anthem. This song had its beginnings as a *regina* in Guantánamo. Wilson only claimed to have composed the first four measures of the well-known refrain, hence authorship and copyright were granted to Joseíto Fernández (1908-1979). In 1918 Wilson began playing with José Hechavarría's *estudiantina*, Cocuyo, a group that focused on son and *danzón*. Throughout much of the twentieth century, he led his own groups and composed popular songs such as *En la casa de Epifanita*, *Lola se quiere casá*, and *Los celos de Cachita*, among others.[24]

Corroborated by many eyewitnesses such as María Aurelia Leguen, Wilson gave a sworn statement in 1991, stating that he created the first four measures of *Guantanamera* in July of 1929, when he was contracted by Toto Bosch to perform at a party for Bosch's

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[23] David García indicates that some of the musicians he interviewed believed Lilí to be a CIA operative, but this is unfounded. David García, telephone conversation with author, New York, 11 December 2001.

[24] Tomás Casademunt, *Son de Cuba* (Mexico City: Trilce Ediciones, 1999), 14.

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daughter, Zoila. The party took place at 664 Carlos Manuel between Paseo and Narciso López, near a store called *La Castellana*. For this engagement, Wilson (tres) hired José Cambrón (trumpet), Enrique Dibusnay (guitar), Joaquin Ramírez (timbales), Desiderio Labate (marímbula), Elpidio Vera (maracas), and Felipe "Pipi" Corona (vocals). Asking the musicians to arrive at 8pm, Wilson took out his tres and began warming up while Pipi Corona began to fool around and dance. At about 8:20pm, an attractive young woman walked by the musicians when the flirtatious Pipi Corona made a *piropo* (catcall) towards the woman. Stopping and responding with vulgar insults, the woman brought another response from Juan Ramirez, *"¿qué se habrá creido la guajira guantanamera ésta?"* (Who does that country peasant girl from Guantánamo think she is?).[25] At that point, Wilson took the phrase, singing and playing it on his tres in the key of G Major: "Guantanamera, guajira guantanamera". The musicians went in to the house and performed it at the party, with Pipi Corona singing and even Bosch's daughter, Zoila, joining in with them on the piano.

In 1929, sometime after this event, Wilson, Pipi Corona, Joaquin García, and Juan Limonta booked a tour to perform in Santiago, Palma, Bayamo, Havana, and Mexico. Wilson's montuno, *Guantanamera*, was part of their repertoire. Having previously experienced a bad road gig in Villaclara that did not pay and heeding his mother's tears, Wilson backed out and asked his friend Rigoberto "Maduro" Hechevarría a.k.a. *El surdo de oro* (the lefthander of gold) to take his place. The group did not make it to Mexico, but they did perform in Havana as Alejo Carpentier confirms as early as 1946:

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[25] Reinaldo Cedeño Pineda, "El Diablo y la luz", *Venceremos* 10 July 1993: 7.

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> Recently a Havana radio station had great success with a country song called La guantanamera that was brought to the capital by authentic singers.[26]

In this passage, Carpentier is referring to Joseíto Fernández's radio broadcasts, beginning in the late 1930s and 1940s, where he regularly performed the song and would give the news of the day in décima. In his book, *Cuba y su sones*, Natalio Galán corroborates 1927/1930 as the time when this refrain of Guantánamo arrived in Havana.[27] Citing Danilo Orozco, Tony Evora writes "this traditional air comes to us through different ways from an anonymous work profoundly related to nengón from Oriente."[28]

Joseíto Fernandez claims to have written *Guantanamera* in 1929, yet his stories about its creation are never consistent. By his own admission, Fernández learned the refrain while he was a member of singer Cheo Marquetti's group, but it is conceivable that he learned the song during a visit to Guantánamo in the 1930s, which is documented in photos. Interestingly, it was the *teatro bufo* (comic theater) actor, Ramón Espigul, who copyrighted the song in 1930. Numerous recordings by other artists appeared throughout the 1930s, but Fernández's own version was not registered until 1941. Sometime in the 1940s, a composer named Julian Orbón added décimas from José Martí's *Versos sencillos*. While a student in New York City, Orbón's disciple Hector Angullo

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[26] Alejo Carpentier, *La música en Cuba*, (1946; reprint, Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1979), 36: "Hace poco, una estación de radio de la Habana obtuvo un gran éxito de popularidad con una canción de buen corte campesino, titulada *La Guantanamera*, que había sido traída a la capital por auténticos 'cantadores.'"
[27] Galán, 314.
[28] Tony Evora, *Orígenes de la música cubana: los amores de las cuerdas y el tambor* (Madrid, Spain: Alianza Editorial, 1997), 299: "este aire tradicional proviene por diferentes vías de una muestra anónima de profundo código relacionado con el nengón oriental."

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incorporated some of his own changes and taught it to Pete Seeger, who would go on to popularize it worldwide.

Wilson claimed that in the 1930s Rafael Inciarte and Luis Morlote told him that he could not register his montuno as a composition because it lacked the minimum requirement of 16 bars.[29] Subsequent requests for help also met with difficulty, but in the 1990s a new generation of musical activists took up his cause. In the mid to late 1990s, a sort of grand jury was convened in Guantánamo that interviewed 52 witnesses and collected documents to support the Wilson claim. A case for Wilson's "paternity" was taken as far as the Cuban supreme court, but the results were inconclusive and for unknown reasons the case was not continued.

Local musicologists such as Ramón Gómez Blanco and Santiago Moreaux Jardines see the song as having many stages and transitions; no one piece is removable. These individuals offer a reasonable tripartite or trinomial authorship of the song: (1) Wilson's initial four-bar, syncopated montuno, (2) Joseíto's obvious lengthening of the phrase through the addition of connecting melodic material and important cadences, and (3) the addition of Martí's poetry through the popularization of Pete Seeger's version.[30] The Havana-based musicologist Helio Orovio and the French musicologist Maya Roy are in agreement with this multi-layered history of the song, including Wilson's part in the narrative.[31] For many reasons, Wilson's story is largely unknown and many are quick to

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[29] Cedeño Pineda, 7.

[30] Ramón Gómez Blanco, "La transición musical de la Guajira Guantanamera," Guantánamo, 1995.

[31] Maya Roy, Musiques Cubaines (Arles, France: Cité de la musique/Actes sud., 1998), 128-130. Helio Orovio, "*La Guantanamera* en tres tiempos," Unión, no. 15 (1993): 37-41.

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discredit it, yet his legacy extends far beyond the claim of authoring the first four bars of *La guantanamera*. A key figure in the development of the son through his activity in the *estudiantinas* of Oriente, Wilson's fame as a tresero exceeded the boundaries of Guantánamo. He composed over 70 *boleros*, sones, *guarachas*, *danzones*, *valzes*, and changüí songs that are still performed to this day. The Wilson story is significant because it demonstrates how a 'piece' of music can be appropriated, transformed, and recontextualized despite the fact that it was created in a specific locale and within the locally-based behavioral expectations. That is to say, Wilson's musical setting of the text makes fun of the woman who responded in a rough manner to Pipi Corona, while subsequent versions by Fernández, Seeger, and others removed her fangs and turned her into an idealized innocent country girl from Guantánamo. In some ways a parallel can be drawn to the way in which people from far beyond Guantánamo view Guantanameros and their music without really knowing what the music sounds like, what the lyrics mean, and what conditions it is created in.

Elio Revé Matos: "El padre de la salsa" (The Father of Salsa)

Elio Revé Matos (1930-1997), perhaps the most internationally recognized musician from Guantánamo, was born in Limonar de Monte Rus, a rural section of the province. Revé was the individual who made the word *changüí* a household name in Cuba, albeit on his own terms. In various television and newspaper interviews he claimed to have been raised in the neighborhood of La Loma del Chivo. His father, Ezekiel Revé, was a bass player from Santiago de Cuba and a descendant of an illustrious Frenchman, Revé, who sired countless children with his four female slaves. A proudly

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self-taught musician, Elio Revé began with the *botija* and conga and also learned to play the *catá* (a wood cylinder struck with two sticks) in the *tumba francesa* before moving on to the *pailas* or timbales. By his own admission, Revé had worked in many menial jobs prior to achieving success as a musician. Cuban musicologist Helio Orovio cites 1947 as the year that Revé began his professional musical career. In 1950 he was a percussionist in *La Orquesta Típica Harmonía*, for which his father played bass and which Ruby Carreras directed.[32] Relocating to Havana around 1955, Revé founded his first *orquesta* and began a six- month engagement at the *Cabaret Hoy* in June 1956. Rooted in the nineteenth-century French-influenced music of his native Oriente, Revé's group was a modern *charanga*, a format that typically features flute and violins in its arrangements along with the usual rhythm section. Calling his music changüí, he began recording a string of hits that make overt references to Guantánamo, changüí, and in some cases local musicians. Such songs include, *Yateras*, *Changüí morena*, *Yo soy el changüí*, *Con el diablillo*, *Mi ritmo changüí*, *El changüí está en la calle*, and the changüí classic, *El 21 de Mayo*, among others. The spoken exchange at the opening of *Yateras* demonstrates this quite well:

> Oye muchachos para donde van?
> ¡Nosotros, pa'l cafetal de Yateras compay!
> *Montuno*: Vamos mi negra a recoger café, vamos mi negra al cafetal de Yateras.
>
> Hey guys, where are you going?
> Us, we're headed to the coffee plantation in Yateras, friend!

---

[32] Ruby Carreras is a local pianist whose career included numerous national television performances with countless Cuban musicians such as Xiomara Alfaro, and many others. For many years she lived in Santiago de Cuba and was the house pianist at the Hotel Santiago. She currently resides in Guantánamo.

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Refrain: Let's go, my negress, to pick coffee, let's go, my negress, to the coffee plantation in Yateras

Revé's pride in his roots is undeniable. Most Cubans at that time probably had never heard of Yateras, let alone visited it.

Proclaiming his connection to changüí and how he personally embodies the genre, the choral refrains for the songs *Changüí morena* and *Yo soy el changüí* illustrate lyrics that are more typical in Revé's songs:

Oye mi changüí morena yo lo traigo para ti mi changüí
Listen to my changüí, dark woman, I bring it for you, my changüí

Yo soy el changüí monte adentro cubano, oye mi cantar
I am changüí from deep in the mountains of Cuba, listen to my song

In later recordings from the 1980s and 1990s, Revé is heard shouting phrases such as "*Guantánamo*" or "*De oriente salió el son*" (the son came from Oriente). Almost all of the songs from these subsequent records are categorized on the back of the album covers as changüís.

In 1967, Revé achieved his biggest hit with *¿Qué bola, qué bolón?* (a Cuban colloquialism meaning 'what's up?'), and would remain in the public's favor until his death in 1997. Always looking for new combinations of instruments and production techniques, much of Revé's success was due to his ingenuity as a producer and bandleader. His was the first popular music band in Cuba to combine Afrocuban sacred *batá* drums in a secular dance format, combine brass with strings, add electric guitars, and use new technologies such as plastic drum skins and electronics. His greatest contribution to Cuban music was that his band was a school-like institution, similar to the bands of Art Blakey or Miles Davis, and some 300 musicians have passed through its ranks. The list

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of Elio Revé Y Su Charangón alumni reads like a who's who of Cuban music and includes such luminaries and Grammy-award winners as Chucho Valdés, Juan Carlos Alfonso, Juan Carlos Formell, Adalberto Álvarez and his father, and numerous others, including Revé's own family members. Tapping these young talents for ideas and encouraging them to experiment, Elio Revé managed to attach his name to many of the innovations in Cuban popular music during the last fifty years. Listening to almost any popular music band in Cuba one is listening to a Revé disciple or a musical innovation first attempted in one or another version of his band.

Awarded numerous government commendations for his contributions to Cuban culture, the Cuban people, and the revolution, as well as the Cuban war effort in Angola, Revé never failed to mention specific musicians and genres of music from Guantánamo during his numerous television and newspaper interviews. Thus, when reading a paper about Revé at the 2000 edition of the annual cultural festival, Olavo Alén expressed the view that socially, Revé behaved and spoke as a changüisero and a Guantanamero: serious and frank, yet also playful and whimsical. Alén views Revé as a figure who was rooted in the rich musical traditions of Guantánamo, but also as one who constantly explored new musical horizons. Alén asserted that Elio Revé was the father of salsa, despite the fact that he might be ostracized by local changüiseros for his seemingly poor rendition of changüí, and by charanga musicians—who felt that his charangón with its concoction of brass and strings was not related to the charanga format at all.

Local perception of Revé is somewhat different. Local musicians are respectful and acknowledge his contributions to Cuban popular music, even arguing that he should be recognized as a musical folklorist who incorporated many elements from local music

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within his own music and, by extension, Cuban popular music. They also see him as a local boy who made it in the big city. Several older musicians—some twenty years his senior— who worked with him during his formative years, confessed that he was not a very good percussionist when they had played together in the 1940s and 1950s. Still others respected his contributions while politely explaining that he was never a changüisero or that his music is not changüí.

From a musical standpoint, the influence of changüí as performed in Guantánamo is more easily audible in his earlier recordings than in later efforts. A number of songs begin with the violin playing the *llamada de montuno* before the band enters in a sort of *ejecución colectiva,* as in traditional changüí. Most timbaleros play an *abanico* (literally 'a fan' but in this case, a five-stroke roll) when making an entrance. Revé, however, almost always plays the five-stroke roll traditionally played by changüí bongó players. Some listeners have argued that Revé's solo improvisations consist of changüí bongó riffs, and I have found this to be true. The use and manner in which the wooden güiro is played also references the changüí guayo. Finally, singing songs about changüí and local figures places Revé squarely within traditional changüí practice. Thus, Elio Revé can be seen as carrying the spirit of traditional changüí within his modern conception.

In 1997 Elio Revé Matos perished in a car crash on his way to perform at an international youth festival in Havana. He was mourned nationally, and during the 2000 edition of the annual cultural festival of Guantánamo his son and widow were presented with an award for his contributions to music made as a native son, followed by a performance in La Loma del Chivo. To this day, Elio Revé y Su Charangón continues to perform under the direction of his son, Elito (Elio Jr.) at the piano.

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Elio Revé, Lilí Martínez, and "El Diablo" Wilson are not the only musicians from Guantánamo to have identified themselves with changüí or used changüí and related subgenres in their music. A broad spectrum of composers and performers seems to have drawn from the same changüí well.

Reference to changüí is also made in a few symphonic works and at least one choral work. Pablo Ruiz Castellanos (1902-??), a self-taught native of Guantánamo who sought to incorporate elements of folklore from Oriente within art music, is considered to be an important creator of a 'national' style akin to Smetana.[33] Among his ballets and symphonic works, *El gran changüí* is thought to be the most serious attempt thus far to use changüí in the symphonic format. Presently, Pablo Ruiz Castellanos and his work have faded from public memory, but a centenary celebration of his birth is planned, including a performance of *El gran changüí*.[34] El Coro Masculino de Guantánamo (Male Chorus of Guantánamo) is another example of a 'classical' setting of changüí. Within their repertoire they have a choral treatment of the classic changüí, *El guararey de la Pastora*, in which the voices are arranged to sound like the instruments in a traditional changüí group.

Creatively adapting musical elements from traditional changüí into his music, native son Lorenzo "Topete" Cisneros (b.1954) is an active participant in the *nueva trova* movement. Since the 1970s, Topete wrote songs about Guantánamo that were performed by Grupo Frontera and others. Currently performing in Havana and Mexico, he

[33] Carpentier, 359.

[34] Paquito D'Rivera expressed fond memories of always seeing Pablo Ruiz Castellanos in cafes around Havana, copying music and smoking. Personal Communication. 25 May 2001 New York.

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categorizes many of his creations as *changüí trova*. Topete's group uses guitar, tres, contrabass, maracas, and *bongó de llave* (with metal tuning lugs). The bass player executes the *tumbao* (bass pattern or groove) commonly used for son. His songs often begin with a *llamada de montuno* that is either played by the tres in a single-note, traditional changüí style or strummed by the guitar. In some instances, such as *Juégate la vida*, the refrain doubles the montuno played by the tres, similar to regina or nengón. As exemplified by *De Guantánamo bajó el changüí*, his lyrics discuss historically important changüiseros[35]:

Dicen que de Yateras bajó el changüí
Que Nene Manfugás fue el mejor
Que Chito Latamblé junto con Pedro Speck
Lo hacen muy popular usted lo vez
Que Titico tambíen sonó
Oye Julia siempre bailó
Cambrón ya se ... el changüí

Dicen que forma parte de mi son
Si oyes la marímbula sonar
Junto con Chito y su tres
Y Mongolo con su bongó
Que tocándola siempre son lo changüí
Oye Topete se lo aprendió
Y lo canto de corazón
Dame marímbula tres y bongo y suena changüí
Guía: Por la madrugada
Montuno: Bajó el changüí

They say that changüí came down from Yateras
That Nene Manfugas [the tresero credited with carrying the son to Santiago in 1892] was the best
That Chito Latamblé together with Pedro Speck
Made it very popular, you see
That Titíco also played
Look, Julia [Reyes] always danced

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[35] Lorenzo Cisneros "Topete", *Changüiseando a la trova y al son*. Barcelona: Ayva Música AV003. Compact Disc. 1998.

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Cambrón already …changüí

They say [it] forms part of my son
That you hear the marímbula play
Together with Chito and his tres
And Mongolo with his bongó
That playing it they will always be changüí
Listen, Topete learned it
And I sing from my heart
Give me marímbula, tres and bongó, and play changüí
Lead: In the dawn
Refrain: Changüí came down

Topete's song, *Suena la maraca y el bongó*, begins with a common unaccompanied changüí tres introduction and is followed by an accompanied bongó *bramido* (gliss) and then a montuno. Other songs follow a more typical changüí structure in the sense that the voice doubles the tres line and the entire ensemble executes *pasos de calles*. The lyrics for this song claim the superiority of changüí and its instruments over son and modern dance music:

Me encontraba yo frente de una tumba (2x)
Iba escuchando un son
Un son tan tradicional
Y no te pido mi changüí
Porque esa cumbancha no se cocina aquí (2x)
Pero Arsenio Rodríguez lo tocaba con Lili (2x)
Porque que no tocas así (2x)
Pero se escucha ahora con teclado y sin bongó (2x)
La salsa suena muy buena pero atraves
Montuno: Suena la maracas y el bongó pa'que suena buena tu sazón

I found myself in front of a drum
Supposedly listening to a son
A very traditional son
And I don't ask you for my changüí
Because this party is not cooked here
But Arsenio Rodríguez played it with Lilí
Why don't you play like this?
But now it is heard with keyboard and without bongó
Salsa sounds very good, but wild

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Refrain: Sound the maracas and the bongó, so that your seasoning is well heard

Looking at these lyrics, one sees that Topete, and several other artists, identify changüí as distinct from son and do so by placing it in a specific geographic location: Guantánamo. Lines such as "*esa cumbancha no se cocina aquí*" further imply that it is not only a music that is seldom heard outside of Guantánamo, but that social conditions such as cooking and playing until dawn are also absent and missed.

Arguably one of the most virtuoso treseros in the world today, Juan de la Cruz Antomarchi a.k.a. "Cotó," would not be mistaken for a tresero from Yateras as he often wears Fubu brand clothing and bright colored beads in his dreadlocks. In Guantánamo, Cotó was a student of Guillermo "Bule" Mustelier. He left Guantánamo for Havana, and has performed, toured internationally, and recorded with Elio Revé and Jesús Alemañy's *Cubanismo*, among others. In 1997, he released the album, *A mi Yemaya* (To my Yemayá [the Afrocuban divinity of the seas]), with his own group, Cotó y Su Eco de Caribe. On this CD, he recorded *¿Dónde está Cotó?*, a humorous song that he would record again with Alemañy in 1998.[36] During the introduction, voices are heard that simulate a changüí gathering. Cotó's voice is heard excitedly naming Guantanameros such as Bule, calling for "*Revé el padre de la salsa*" (Revé, father of salsa), Chito Latamblé, Taveras, and others. The bongó player plays riffs that approximate the bongó de monte riffs, while maracas and a wood guiro are heard playing the traditional changüí guayo and maracas parts. The bass does not play marímbula patterns, but the voice and tres move together

[36] Cotó y su Eco del Caribe, *A mi Yemaya*. La Habana: Egrem CD 0254. Compact disc. 1997. And Cubanismo, *Reencarnación*. London: Hannibal HNCD 1429. Compact disc. 1998.

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while a conga plays straight time. Cotó plays pasos de calles between lines of verse that are rhythmically and harmonically complex and include dissonances. Singing coplas between choral refrains, Cotó interjects phrases such as "*Escucha Guantánamo*" (Listen, Guantánamo), between verses. After two-thirds of the song is performed, the music intensifies and climaxes with a trumpet *mambo* (repeated figure) and then fades out like a traditional changüí. Telling the story of a young boy who eats too much candy, the lyrics can be interpreted as *doble sentido* (double entendre):

Estando yo trabajando allá en el campo
Llegó mi primo con un cartucho de bombón
Me dijo "Prueba y verás que es un encanto
El buen sabor que tienen estos bombones"
Al poco rato cuando me hizo digestión
Le dije "Primo llévame a casa de tía
que prepara una infusión
Que me llegue al corazón
Para sacar de mi estómago ese maldito bombón"
Al lambele yeleye alambeleyeleya
Escucha bien el changüí el que te canta Cotó
Que yo no como mas bombón
Montuno: Porque el bombón me va a matar

I was working out there in the countryside
When my cousin came with a box of candies
He told me "try it and you'll see that it's enchanting
The great taste that these candies have"
Shortly after I finished digesting [the candy]
I said "cousin take me to aunt's house
So that she can prepare an infusion
That will get to my heart
In order to extract this cursed candy from my stomach"
Al lambele yeleye alambeleyeleya
Listen well to this changüí that Cotó is singing for you
That I don't eat candy anymore
Refrain: Because candy will kill me

Interestingly, when introducing this piece at the awards ceremony of the 2000 edition of the annual cultural festival, Cotó was deferential and acknowledged that what he was

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going to perform was not traditional; rather, it was his interpretation of changüí. Thus, he was careful to acknowledge the musical liberties that he was taking with changüí. Cotó was in Guantánamo performing with his group and also served as a judge during the tres competition. Jamming with various changüiseros at the end of the competition, Cotó's solo sounded much more like Jimmy Hendrix than like Chito Latamblé, complete with distortion, dissonance, and the kinds of bodily gestures used by rock guitarists, yet all of the elder musicians—including his teacher Bule, who also performed—seemed content.

Other groups such as Abelardo Veloso y La Orquesta Sensación (*Changüí Monte Adentro* from the album *Changüí Monte*, with the following refrains: "*Por la mañana me voy pa'l monte*" and "*Ay La Maya, se quema La Maya*"), Los Van Van (*El guararey de la Pastora*), and Sierra Maestra (*El guararey de Pastora*) have recorded their interpretations of changüí.[37] At the same time many performers continue to exclaim "Guantánamo" or "changüí" during rhythmic breaks when a wood güiro is employed to simulate changüí, e.g. Afrocuban Allstars and the Areito All Stars. The interpretations of other groups, such as Asere, are similar to Cotó's concept: mentioning changüí personalities and names and incorporating some elements, but not playing traditionally. Lastly, several groups in the United States have also recorded changüí songs with mixed results. These include Ray Barretto (*El guararey de Pastora* retitled *Guararé*), Grupo Sonando, Poncho Sanchez (*Vengan a bailar bailadores*), and my own group, Sonido Isleño (*Kiribá* and *Jazz Changüí*).

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[37] Juan Formell y Los Van Van , *Juan Formell y Los Van Van*. La Habana: Areito LD-3471. Phonorecord. 1973.
Abelardo Veloso y La Orquesta Sensación, *Guajiro de Cunagua* ARO 107. Phonorecord. N.D. [1950s].

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Elements of nengón and changüí can be heard in many son recordings as well. *Monte Rus* is a song performed and recorded by Miguelito Cuní and Felix Chappotín that follows the regina format and a classic regina melody, *En Monte Rus yo tengo un cafetal* (refrain). Finally, Beny Moré's *Guantánamo* also follows one of the most common nengón melodies.

This chapter has only considered music from Guantánamo that is transformed elsewhere, yet the borrowing process works in both directions. Analogous to ongoing discussions about country vs. urban blues in the United States, Danilo Orozco provides a concrete example of just how easily 'modern' music can be transformed into rural nengón when the Familia Valera-Miranda performs Beny Moré's popular hit, *Castellano que buena baila usted.*[38] Similarly, Julian Valier once performed a changüí version of Guillermo Castillo's classic danzón *Tres lindas cubanas*, saying along with Ñico Ya that frequently one would play whatever the public asked for at a changüí party. On another occasion, I saw Miguel Matamoros' *Lágrimas negras* rendered as a changüí. Thus, the performance of changüí and its variants clearly takes on different meanings and functions for each performer.

For performers based in Havana or elsewhere, Guantánamo often connotes an idealized rural mountain 'folk' while the word *changüí* evokes similar sentiments about 'funky' or 'down-home' mountain music. For those who originally hail from the province yet live beyond its borders, playing changüí or its variants can be used as a marker of local identity. For these performers, the motivation for interpreting changüí

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[38] La Familia Valeria-Miranda. *Integral del son: bases históricas.* Liner Notes by Danilo Orozco. Santiago de Cuba: Egrem LD-286, LD-287. Phonorecord. 1979, track 4, side 3.

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lies in maintaining their distinct cultural identity, singing the praises of local culture, and highlighting the local contribution to national culture. Even within Guantánamo, musicians distinguish between rural and urban styles, by sound, performance techniques, and performance choices. In this way changüí is a powerful emblem of local culture that is knowingly and unknowingly named and drawn from in a variety of musical situations both in Cuba and abroad. For these reasons it is clear that changüí should be classified as its own complex of music, dance, and social behavior with its own variations that can be heard both within Guantánamo and beyond the province throughout Cuba and the rest of the world.

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Musical Example 5.1
Nengón - Standard Patterns

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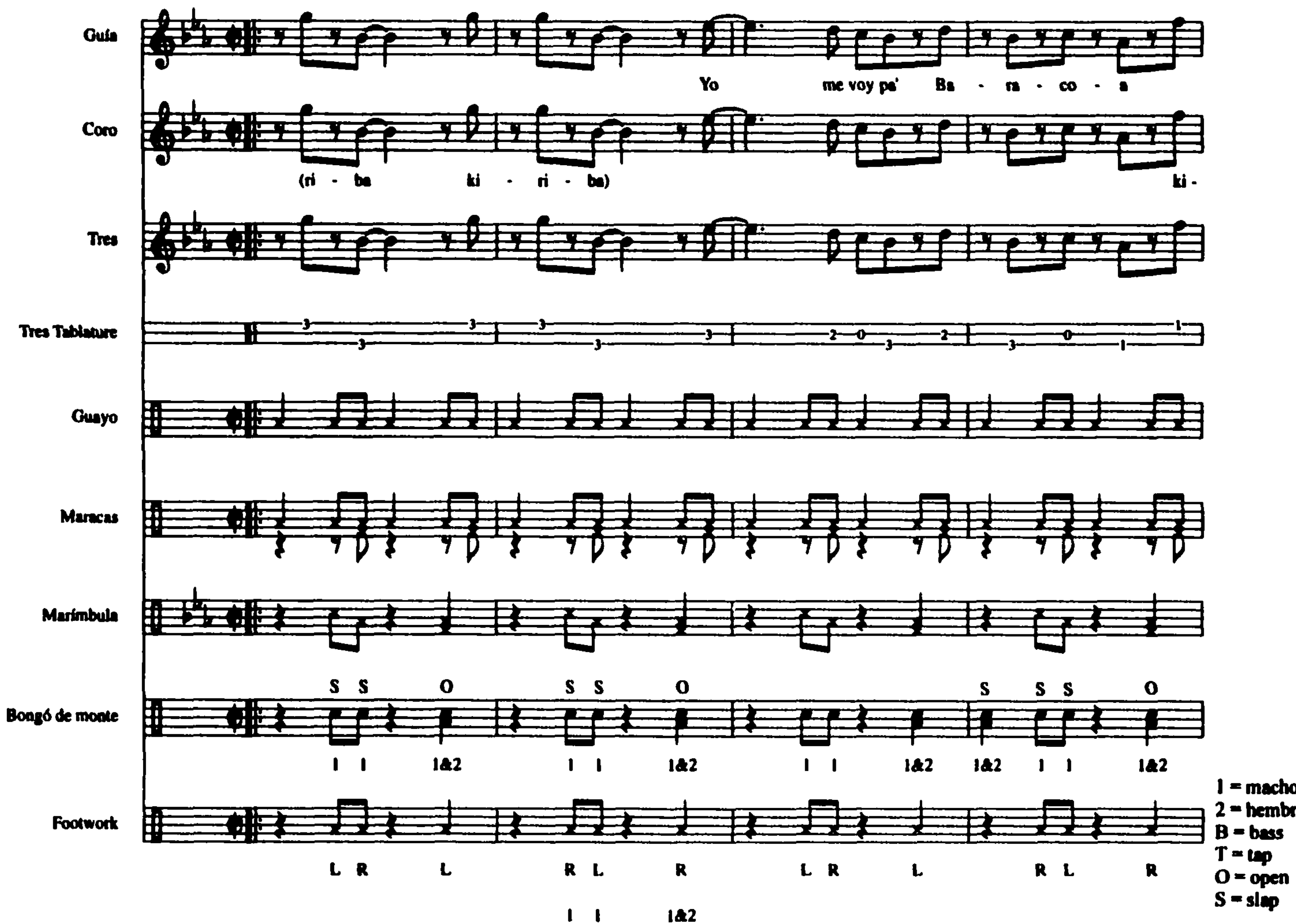
Musical Example 5.2
Kiribá - Standard Patterns



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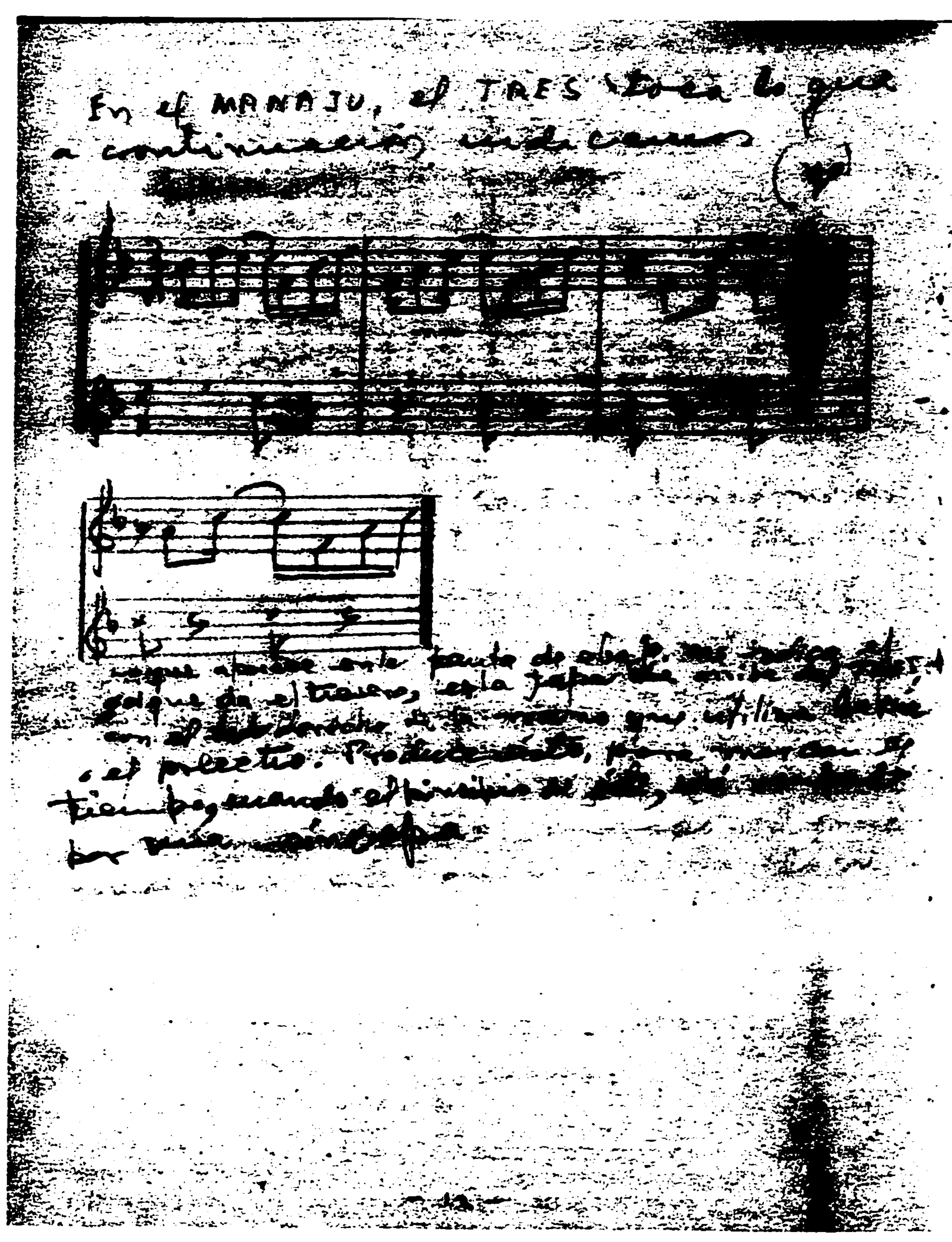

Musical Example 5.3
Manajú
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Musical Example 5.4
Rompía
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Musical Example 5.5
Lilí - Nicolás corrió

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Musical Example 5.6
Lilí - Mi changüí son

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Chapter 6: Festivals, State-Sponsored Musical Competitions for Changüí, and the Process of Folklorization

For three consecutive years (1998-2000), I have attended the annual cultural festival, La Guantanamera, held in the city of Guantánamo. Organized around a theme, each festival has many large-scale performances by local and nationally known performers that usually perform for large audiences. Province-wide meetings of artists, musicians, librarians and archivists, and writers are the highlight of the festival. In the words of Carmen Lamorú, director of culture for the province, "The Guantanamera [festival] stimulates artistic creation, not only between creators but also amongst the population."[1] Initiated in 1996, the meetings provide opportunities for informative exchanges between creative personalities, intellectuals, and bureaucrats from each *municipio* (county) and often include high-ranking officials from Havana and Santiago de Cuba. Because public participation is encouraged, these meetings and conferences offer opportunities to see how local concerns and objectives are expressed and how those concerns interact with points of view articulated by non-local scholars and bureaucrats, usually based in the capital and who represent the country to the world beyond Cuba.

It is still unclear to me at the time of this writing which event came first, the Concurso Composición Changüisera or the Fiesta Provincial del Changüí, and what the prizes were at these events. Another changüí festival is held each year in Yateras for three

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[1] "La Guantanamera estimula la creación artística, no sólo entre creadores sino en la población." Magda Rosales Rodríguez, "Los cinco de La Guantanamera," *Venceremos,* 2 Diciembre 2000, 7.

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consecutive days near Christmas (Dec. 23-25 or thereabouts, depending on transportation and other logistics).

Every night, after the papers have been read, parties with music and dance are held at the archives, the library, the local UNEAC, and other venues. Locals and non-locals interested in changüí find the highlight of these festivals to be the changüí fiesta and songwriting competition. The competition has grown and changed throughout its history and I have observed many changes in the three years that I have been attending. In 1999, a tres competition was added; bongó and dance competitions were added in 2000. A marímbula competition is planned for the 2001 edition of the festival.

Chapter 6 presents the results of the three consecutive festivals and state-sponsored musical competitions that I attended and sometimes participated in. The evidence will show that these musical competitions and conferences are sites where the processes of musical change are most visible. Resistance to change and the hardening of old ways, no less than a desire for change are evident in compositions, performances, and the deliberations of judges. Changes in performance technique are particularly visible when observing the performances of younger musicians.

Due to the setting and the sheer number of contestants, the pieces heard at the competitions are short, three to five minutes in length, with no room for the extended vocal improvisation or dueling typical of informal gatherings. Judges are supposed to use 'purely' musical criteria to judge the pieces, but we will see that this is not always the case: many people sit at the judges' table but it is not always clear who is officially charged with the duty of adjudicating the proceedings. Perhaps this is irrelevant, because "the more the merrier" seems to be a pleasantly inclusive Cuban attitude. As shown below, watching how each competition is run gives a clear picture of the folklorization process in action as well as indicating the vigor of a thriving tradition and the logistical challenge of corralling a given tradition into a competition setting. Judges and

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performers incorporate new ideas and responses to these logistical challenges each year, making the competitions continually entertaining and fascinating to watch.

Just as Chapter 5 presented variations of changüí found within and beyond the province of Guantánamo, this chapter shows several instances of where and how locally-based musicians and persons interested in local musical history interact with musicologists and musicians from beyond the province. In the past few years alone, these competitions have taken on international characteristics with the attendance and participation of foreign musicians and people interested in local musical culture, particularly changüí.

The changüí songwriting competition attracts the greatest number of changüí groups, composers, musicians, and non-performing, party-seeking changüiseros. Officially started around 1989, the changüí songwriting competition offers monetary prizes to the winning participants. Sometime in the late 1990s, the date of the changüí songwriting competition was moved to coincide with La Guantanamera, the annual cultural festival. Since 1999, the festival has consistently been held from December 1 to the 4. As far as my research has indicated, until 1999 the top prize-winning compositions were usually penned by members of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo or by musicians and composers affiliated with the group. In 1999, younger musical groups and composers took second and third prize, while Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo's director, Andrés Fistó Cobas won first prize. All of the members of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo and other professional changüí dancers and musicians were taken out of the competition, assuming positions as judges at the 2000 edition of the competition.

The 1998 Festival and Competitions

This was the first local cultural festival and songwriting competition that I attended. The night before the competition, a formally-organized changüí party took place at the Centro Provincial Comunitario de Cultura, the site of the competition. The

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Centro is located at Calle Martí 970 between Carretera and Emilio Giró. Here, a number of amateur groups performed including a young all-female group called Las Perlas del Changüí. More established groups like Estrellas Campesinas from Yateras and Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo also performed. At the pre-contest fiesta, dancing and drinking are encouraged, but in the contest environment dancing is discouraged and there are no roast pigs or any other foods available. However, the rum flows freely, even impairing one judge's ability to perform his job at all on the night of December 15.

According to a summary of the competition, 14 songs were submitted on tape and prepared by Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo and Grupo Changüí La Guantanamera; two of those entries were disqualified for not meeting the conditions to compete. The first round of competition officially started on December 15 at 8:30pm with the presentation of all 12 songs. During the competition many authors were presented by pseudonym only:

Mi corazón nació por ti, Mirian Caraballo Lara a.k.a. "La India del guaso," "La India del sur" or "La India del San Justo"

Higiene es salud, José Diaz Planes and Rácifo Durán a.k.a. "Los do guajiros de Yateras"

La cultura no tiene frontera, José Diaz Planes and Rácifo Durán

El changüí no puede morir, Mirian Caraballo Lara

Carmelo, Mariela y Marais

En casa de Isabel Luque, Antonio Cisneros Arnaud a.k.a. "Ñico Ya" and Rácifo Durán a.k.a. "Los dos changüiseros del norte"

¡Ay Caray!, Andrés Rodríguez a.k.a. "El guajiro del valle"

Pincha y cabalga, Andrés Rodríguez a.k.a. "El guajiro del valle"

Soy changüisera, Marais

Vamos pa'l monte compay, Andrés Rodríguez a.k.a. "El guajiro del valle"

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Vengan a bailar soneros, Andrés Fistó Cobás a.k.a. "Taveras" or "El alacran"

A bailar changüí, Andrés Fistó Cobás

The lyrics for these songs cover a wide range of themes, expressing contemporary concerns such as culture has no boundaries, hygiene is health, changüí can never die, etc. *Pincha y cabalga* is an *homenaje* (homage) to the musician, Francisco Repilado a.k.a. Compay Segundo. As seen in Chapter 4, these do not appear to have been topics of interest for Masó, Nuñez, and others from the first major cluster of changüiseros. One could argue that contemporary contest songs are still about the changüí genre and local pride, but glancing at the lyrics for the top three songs, only the second prize-winning song discusses actual changüiseros by name in a personal historical narrative à la *El 21 de Mayo*:

Vengan a bailar changüí, Andrés Fistó Cobas a.k.a. "Taveras" – First Place (31 points)

Aquí en el Guaso se ven cosas muy valiosas
Que en el resto de la isla no se pueden encontrar
La tumba francesa también la Merced
El toque Carabalí y la danza de Jagüey
Tambien Los Cosiá, un zoológico de piedra
El yunque de Baracoa el nengón y el kiribá
Montuno: Vengan a bailar changüí

Here in Guantánamo one sees valiant things
That are not found in the rest of the island
The tumba francesa also the merced (?)
The music of the Carabalí and the dance of Jagüey [2 local folkloric groups]
Also Los Cosía [a local Afro-Haitian ensemble], a zoo of stone-carved animals
The hammer of Baracoa, nengón and kiribá
Refrain: Come dance changüí

En casa de Isabel Luque, Antonio Ciseneros Arnaud a.k.a. Ñico Ya and Rácifo Durán – Second Place (28 points)

En casa de Isabel Luque se ha formado un bachatón
Neno tocando su tres, Naldo Pons con su bongó
Kindilán en la marímbula, tocando maracas yo

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Bella comenzó a bailar buscando un buen bailador
Como no encontró a ninguno bueno a Marcelino agarró
Montuno: Bella tuvo que bailar con Marcelino

In Isabel Luque's house they had a huge party
Neno [Correoso?] playing his tres, Naldo Pons with his bongo
[Justo] Kindilán on marímbula, I [Ñico Ya] was playing maracas
Bella [Evelia Noblet Cobas] began to dance looking for a good dancer
Not finding anyone she grabbed Marcelino
Refrain: Bella had to dance with Marcelino

El changüí no puede morir, Mirian Caraballo Lara – Third Place (27 points)

Quiero cantarle un changüí
De mi propia inspiración y mucha sinceridad
No debemos olvidar esta linda tradición
Adelante changüiseros ésto tiene que seguir
Dando frutos y semillas para la nueva generación
Décimas de corazón
Guía: Allá en La Loma del Chivo
Montuno: El changüí no puede morir

I want to sing you a changüí
Of my own inspiration and much sincerity
We must not forget this beautiful tradition
Onward changüiseros this must continue
Giving fruits and seeds for the new generation
Décimas from the heart
Lead: There in the Loma del Chivo neighborhood
Refrain: Changüí can not die

Reading the official summary of the event, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how the judges arrived at the point-value of each piece. Interestingly, at the 1998 contest, the voting and point valuation was the first of many situations I have witnessed or taken part in where local and non-local (in this case, national) interests clashed in a respectful and productive fashion.

The judging panel included two well-respected musicologists from Havana, Olavo Alén Rodríguez, director of CIDMUC and his colleague, Ana Victoria Casanova. The remaining four judges were local musicians who were intimately involved with changüí

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as composers and performers: Feliberto Verdecia, Ramón Gómez, Blanco, Marcelino Ruiz, and Carlos Borromeo Planche a.k.a. "Cambrón."

Sitting in on the deliberations, I saw the first topic that the group of judges disagreed on: appropriateness of song lyrics. The two musicologists from the capital expressed the view that one song's lyrics were *chavacán*, immature and in poor taste. Seated at the table, the venerated changüí singer, Cambrón, who at 89 was witness to and participated in much of the genre's development, found the song to be perfectly acceptable and even typical.

Next, two local judges also took issue with the fact that many of the songs lacked the *pasos de calle*, obligatory arpeggios between lines of verse that are characteristic of changüí. The same judges felt that many songs also had harmonic progressions and rhythmic patterns atypical of changüí. The crux of the conflict was that the two musicologists from the capital had no problem with these modifications to the musical material and structure, arguing that innovation was crucial to the growth and sustenance of a tradition. Addressing the panel, Ramón Gómez felt that if elements of son were allowed to penetrate into changüí in the contest setting, the result would render the two styles indistinguishable from one another in the near future. The other local judges agreed that the manner in which the contestants executed their songs was not very traditional, mixing contemporary rhythms and harmonies while, foregoing traditional performance techniques and sounds.

All of the judges concurred that having one's song defended by an all-female group was disadvantageous because the only competing all-female group, Grupo Changüí La Guantanamera, was not as musically strong as Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo or the

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other groups.[2] A separate category was suggested for women, but had not yet materialized by 2001. Gender-biased comments, perhaps rooted in machismo, were made by some male audience-members regarding the group's appearance, instead of comments revolving around the content of their lyrics or the quality of their music. In retrospect, this part of the discussion seems strange, particularly because many female changüiseras have distinguished themselves throughout history. Names such as La Negra con Pelo, Tuntun Gaínza, María Guevara, Cecilia la Baracoesa, and others are repeated in many conversations with older musicians and historians. Musicians such as Jesús Álvarez often talk about an excellent group of older female musicians who performed in Guantánamo in the early 1980s. Finally, many of the musicians that Danilo Orozco recorded in 1983 were older women.

The judges from the capital seemed to vote for the most innovative pieces and the locals opted for the most traditional pieces. At the end of the deliberations, the prizes were announced: two of the three winning songs were written by members of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo and the third was penned by a composer who was close with the musicians in the group.

At the conclusion of the contest, the chief local judge, Ramón Gómez Blanco, announced the judges' desire that future competitions have separate categories for older styles and contemporary styles of changüí. In the competition summary, Gómez detailed the judges' plan for the future. First, municipal festivals and competitions would be held at which the members of the 1998 judges panel could participate with the aim of

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[2] In the competition setting, musicians and judges use the word *defend* rather than *present*.

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improving the judging process. Second, workshops on changüí would be run in order to elevate the technical level of teachers and musicians who specialize in the genre. Third, categories for treseros and bongoceros would be created and the audience would select the best dance teams. Fourth, each style of changüí should have its own competition category (primary, traditional, contemporary). Fifth, the prizewinners would receive their checks on the day that they won. Six, the provincial changüí festival (an old festival) should be revived.

Other Situations Where Local and Non-local Views Interacted at the 1998 Festival

Interactions between local and non-local perspectives were not limited to the judging process, but were evident throughout the competition, especially on two occasions: the papers and/or presentations given by Alén and Casanova and the coronation spectacle for Celina González.

In the afternoon of December 16, during a paper on Celina Gonzalez and música campesina, Olavo Alén's comments were met by a variety of responses from locals. This kind of interaction between visiting scholars and local residents is welcomed (as seen in Carmen Lamorú's statement at the beginning of this chapter), but local pride emphasizes—more than visiting scholars often acknowledge-- the extent to which musical genres such as changüí and nengón shaped Cuban music and were crucial in the trajectory of Cuban musical history. In light of this observation, it is easy to understand why visiting scholars are often tense and defensive. One local woman said that young people are not interested in changüí. Another woman asked "why not put changüí on Palmas Y Caña?" (a TV show with música campesina) instead of Celina González, who

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is really from the western province of Matanzas. She continued, saying that changüí is música campesina and pointed out that Guantanameros also enjoyed Mexican music.[3] This woman concluded by saying that: "En el campo nadie escucha a música campesina" (in the countryside nobody listens to música campesina). Identifying herself as a schoolteacher another woman said that young Cubans feel that Celina "es música para los viejos" (music for old people), but she concluded that Celina should be honored in Guantánamo. A young man who works as an administrator for one of the changüí groups (Bongó Caliente) said that Revé's interpretation of changüí is contemporary, but not traditional. He concluded that changüí came before música campesina.

Olavo responded directly only to the young man but he addressed all of these as well as other comments. He stated that no one could determine whether changüí predates música campesina or vice versa. In the western part of the island, a fiesta campesina (country party) is called a *guateque* while in the east a fiesta campesina is known as a changüí. In both cases, campesinos come from the mountains to some location in order to party. Such occasions could be birthdays, weddings, etc. He emphasized that this is not only a rural phenomenon: in the urban centers it is known as rumba. It is not possible to say that one came first, because they happened simultaneously. What is more important is the function of the music. Olavo quite emphatically argued that changüí, música campesina, and rumba were all developing simultaneously, but that each one contributed equally to the formation of the son. He viewed linear narratives of how Cuban music developed as problematic and unrealistic. Alén was against the concept of

[3] There is a strong presence of Mexican music on the radio and a local Mariachi group participated in the parade at the Fiesta Guantanamera.

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convertir a museo viviente (becoming a living museum), saying that you can't make anyone play this music for reason of pure preservation because people will turn away from something they are forced to like or to study.

At another daytime presentation during the1998 festival (either before or after the música campesina presentation), Olavo and Ana Victoria spoke about the song, *Guantanamera*. From the outset the tone of this presentation was defensive. Early on, certain ideas were presented as facts. Olavo and Ana Victoria argued that the song was written in 1928 and that it was a *guajira*, not a son. Olavo argued that the *tumbao* (recurring rhythmic/harmonic pattern) is a classic guajira. After discussing Hector Angulo's role in helping Pete Seeger with his verses, Olavo talked about European groups recording the song in their native languages and proceeded to play 15 versions of the song by different people like Beny More. As soon as the presentation was concluded, Alén was confronted by composer/historian Santiago Moreaux Jardínes who said that local tresero Herminio García "El Diablo" Wilson wrote the first four bars of the song. Olavo tried to show that even if Wilson wrote the first measures in 2/4 the phrase would only be 16 measures long and if it were in 4/4 it would be 8 measures long. Thus, he wouldn't even have half of the chorus. He did this by conducting and counting with his partner Ana Victoria. Olavo then tried to play the piano and claimed that no one had the ownership of the chord progression, almost like the blues. To bolster his argument he talked about his time studying in East Germany and how another Cuban colleague was there studying physics. His friend said how incredible it was that Einstein created the theory of relativity when everyone had all of the same information that he had at his disposal to do it. He likened Fernández to Einstein in this respect. However, the

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comment about studying in Germany came off as snobbish and classist. To his credit, though, Olavo brought up the fact that the guajira is an interpretation of música campesina, that it isn't really música campesina. But in retrospect, Chapter 5 shows that Olavo did not have the facts about Wilson's claim and had never heard Wilson sing or perform what he believed to be his contribution to the song. There was an important dynamic observed during this argument between locals convinced of Wilson's authorship and the non-local musicologists. This situation, the Wilson contribution to the world-famous song, epitomizes how locals view their contribution to the development of Cuban music while non-locals diminish or reject those assertions.

Homenaje a Celina Gonzalez: The Coronation of the Queen of Música Campesina

Each year during the annual cultural festival in Guantánamo, Cuba, the festival directors, who are local government officials, choose an individual or individuals to honor for their contributions to Cuban culture. While some locals have been honored in the past, in 1998 the Hispanic-Cuban singer Celina Gonzalez was crowned as the queen of música campesina. Despite the fact that Ms. Gonzalez's deceased husband and musical partner was from the province of Guantánamo, the duo's music is analogous to U.S. country music in its rural pretensions and sound.

During this event, I began to get a better sense of how the musicians felt about the whole *música campesina* category. This term is generally understood to mean white-oriented genres such as punto and guajira. Some local musicians who are of African descent privately expressed dismay at this event. The issue at stake was that their local genre, changüí, would not be properly honored in their own home province as Ms.

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Gonzalez's music and person were honored. They reasoned that she was white and that they and their music are categorized as black. This opinion acknowledged an inherent flaw in the taxonomy of Cuban musical genres, which makes rumba and the music of santería the epitomes of black music, while placing música campesina exclusively in the domain of white, Hispanic Cubans. This taxonomy allows for reinforcement of the national project, which elevates son as the transculturated genre par excellence. This black-white dichotomy categorizes changüí as a mere variant of son instead of showing how it is really unique compared to son because it possesses musical and social characteristics of son, música campesina, and Afrocuban secular genres such as rumba.

The coronation spectacle was the final and main event of the annual cultural festival. A number of musical groups and dance troupes performed in the elaborate show including Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. After a few groups performed, Celina was brought to the stage in a carriage pulled by white horses. The crowd gasped as the horses got spooked, almost overturning the carriage as it came close. But shock soon turned to laughter, perhaps because Guantanameros recognized that Celina was going through what many of them see and experience each day: the problems and dangers of riding in overcrowded carriages pulled by overworked and often understandably cantankerous horses. Many more groups performed while Ms. Gonzalez sat on a throne onstage. Once her performance was announced it was another half hour before the sound system was working and Ms. Gonzalez would perform with her group. A comedian and hostess were forced to kill time with bad jokes. Before performing, Celina was presented with a large award announcing her coronation as the queen of música campesina. Small children gave her wreaths and flowers symbolic of royalty. Her band consisted of a tres player, an

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electric bassist, a keyboardist, three percussionists, and her sons on vocals. At a party later that night, members of Los Universales del Son coaxed Celina into dancing to nengón and kiribá as they performed, reminding her from the stage that this was Guantánamo's and Cuba's "real" country music.

The coronation of Celina Gonzalez as the queen of música campesina, local reactions to non-local musicologists' views of Cuban music history, and the judges' disagreements at the songwriting contest signal deeper issues of music, race, and culture. In the face of assertions by non-local musicologists, local musicians feel that their view of Cuban musical history is neglected. Locals feel that the non-local nationalist musical project—as expressed by Alén and Casanova-- does not position changüí accurately, because the music does not fit into the established criteria for either black or white music or son. Changüiseros see their music as being both black and música campesina, rural and urban, often even calling their music *rumba*.

In a country that prides itself on cultural mixtures, the contributions of musicians of Haitian descent are unsung. Their music falls between the cracks and is somehow not really Cuban, despite the fact that historically, racial categories have been more fluid in Cuba and the Caribbean when compared to the United States. This is not to say that musicologists do not study Haitian-derived genres, but they are not central to the national narrative of the development of Cuban music. The changüiseros' predicament shows how the racial categorization of folk music in Cuba is essentialist and outmoded, besides denying local narratives of history.

The most vocal local judge, Ramón Gómez Blanco, has offered one possible solution to this problem. He advocates changing the category of música campesina to

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música montunera, music from the mountains. This term would encompass all rural musical traditions regardless of race and ethnicity. This solution seems effective and allows for both black and white contributions to rural forms of music, while at the same time expanding upon the national narrative of Cuban music that emanates from Havana. But it is doubtful that those involved in the telling of the national musical narrative will alter their categories of genre classification any time soon, thus perpetuating problematic and archaic notions of music, race, and culture in a self-proclaimed revolutionary society.

The 1999 Festival and Competitions

When I left Guantánamo after Christmas in 1998, I was told by various cultural bureaucrats and musicians that the 1999 festival would be dedicated to Carlos Borromeo Planche "Cambrón" and Pedro Speck. This is important because the two local musical protagonists to be honored were changüiseros. Sadly, Cambrón passed away that spring and his image figured prominently in that summer's carnival processions. The 1999 Festival differed from the previous edition because it reflected local concerns more strongly. The judging panel of 1999 did not include musicologists from the capital; all the judges were local musical personalities, except for a Camagueño who resides permanently in Guantánamo. The changes between the 1998 and 1999 competitions indicate an increase in local assertion of autonomy from the non-local nationalist project in terms of defining local musical identities. An homenaje was given to Pedro Speck on December 2 that featured Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, Babul, Topete, and others.[4]

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[4] The local emphasis was also visible during Guantánamo's carnival (San Joaquin) earlier that summer when Cambrón's image was seen throughout the elaborate processions.

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A changüí tres-playing competition attracted many competitors and awarded a brand new, handmade instrument to the winner. New instruments are hard to acquire within the region and this incentive increased the competitiveness of the event. The judging panel for this event included Cotó, a tres virtuoso based in the capital who is also a native of Guantánamo, as well as several local musicians such as Ramón Gómez Blanco, Marcelino Ruiz (tresero/bassist with Los Universales del Son), Carmelo Irve Suteran (tresero with Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo), and the luthier who provided the prize, Raúl Lage from Havana.

During the preliminary round of competition there were some 15 contestants who ranged in age from early 20s to late 70s, most hailing from the city of Guantánamo Yateras, and Salvador. The obligatory song for the contest was *El guararey de Pastora* and Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo backed up each contestant. It was interesting that the judges chose a well-known song as opposed to a more difficult, less-known song. At the beginning of the contest, each tres player stated the theme of *El guararey de Pastora* with his or her instrument and then began to improvise, but this proved to be time consuming as well as extra work for the Grupo Changüí vocalists who sang the song while the tres played the melody. After the first few contestants, the judges asked only for an improvisation on the montuno for *El guararey de Pastora*. In addition, those who made it to the second round, myself included, were also invited to improvise over another theme.

The second round had some nine treseros and the playing was even better than the previous day. At the conclusion of the competition, Guillermo Mustelier a.k.a. Bule and

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Cotó performed as well.[5] That night an elaborate awards ceremony and show was held at El Teatro Guaso, where the winning tresero, Donald Sinclair, a Guantanamero of West Indian descent, performed again. Surprisingly, there was a second-place winner as well: Maray Bello Legrát, a woman, emblematic of greater participation and increased skill on the part of female performers and composers overall. Although this young woman had performed quite well, I again heard gender-biased comments from male audience-members who were more interested in her appearance than in her musicianship.

Grupo Changüí La Guantanamera seemed to anticipate such reactions and their songs reflected the obnoxious sexist comments that they were tired of enduring. One of their songs, *Changüí con aroma de mujer* (Changüí with female aroma), begins with a line that asks why women can't play traditional changüí. Their performance of La Guantanamera earned second-place for the 1999 competition's third-place winner, Mirian Caraballo Lara:

La Guantanamera toca changüí cubano
Para que ustedes lo gocen
En familia y como hermanos
Somos del guaso presten atención
No damos pasos atrás
Y adelante seguirá esta linda tradición
Lo llevamos en el corazón
Porque somos changüiseras
Montuno: La Guantanamera seguirá con el ejemplo de Cambrón

La Guantanamera plays Cuban changüí
So that you enjoy it
Amongst family like brothers and sisters
We are from Guantánamo, pay attention
We won't step backwards
And forward this beautiful tradition will continue
We carry it in our hearts

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[5] Bule is my teacher and Cotó's teacher as well.

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Because we are changüiseras
Refrain: La Guantanamera will follow Cambrón's example

In general, young musicians made their presence felt at the 1999 edition of the songwriting competition. The director of the main professional group won the award for best composition, but the second- and third-place groups were made up of musicians in their twenties and early thirties, many of whom participate in other folkloric ensembles. These younger performers brought energy and vitality to the contest with songs that spoke of departed veteran changüiseros, while reflecting new stylistic trends such as rap. The judges were impressed with their seriousness and ability and the audience responded with enthusiasm. All told there were seven groups representing the three municipalities of Yateras, Manuel Tames, and Guantánamo.

Groups such as Sangre Changüisera, Los Morenos del Changüí, and Grupo Changüí La Guantanamera comprised young musicians in their twenties and thirties. The daughter of "El Sinsonte" Andrés Rodríguez, lead vocalist for Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, also made her debut as a composer and vocalist at the competition (check this). Although Sangre Changüisera's second-place winning song was penned by José Díaz Planes, a veteran changüisero, and Santiago Moreaux Jardines wrote much of Grupo Changüí La Guantanamera's material (he was also their director), these groups performed with exuberance often including choreography and spirited shouts. Most impressive was Los Morenos del Changüí, whose three entries were well received. Ariel Daudinot Brooks was the lead vocalist and main composer for the group until recently. His *Clave del changüí* (Key to changüí) has a complex and highly syncopated melody with rhythmic nuances from rap. The lyrics (quoted on pp. 148-49) offer a moving tribute to departed changüiseros that exhibits Ariel's respect for his traditions and his desire to

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enrich and contemporize these same traditions. When I sat down with Ariel in December 2000, he explained to me some of his ideas about changüí.

Born July 4, 1966 in Sigual del Medio (Yateras), Ariel was a percussionist with Danza Libre who started playing changüí in 1990. Shortly after, he played with Babúl and Los Morenos del Changüí. He explained that his changüís are for young people and not for older dancers. But he is quick to acknowledge that he learns from and hangs out with older changüiseros and loves the oldest traditions.

This is evident when he says that "changüí debe evolucionarse con la misma instrumentación" [changüí has to develop with the same instrumentation]. He claims to have been the first person to play the non-traditional timba breakdown figures (accents on beats 3 and 4 of four quarter notes) normally associated with modern Cuban dance music on the marímbula, when he was the first marímbula player in Los Morenos del Changüí. Ariel does not agree with the tradition of starting and ending every changüí song with the montuno. In his opinion changüí has too much ostinato and the genre loses currency with young people because of this lack of change in its execution.

Interestingly Julio Valier, vocalist for the tradition-minded Los Seguidores del Changüí, arrived at the end of this interview. I couldn't help but notice him rolling his eyes as he listened to Ariel explaining his views about changüí. Later when Ariel was gone, he expressed his total disagreement with what he had just heard. He thought that Ariel was incorrect regarding the need for the music to evolve, saying he knows nothing about changüí.

The conflicting views expressed by younger changüiseros, such as Ariel Daudinot Brooks, and older musicians, such as Julio Valier, offer an excellent view of some of the

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important recurring issues that surround the discussion of the genre and its future. When younger musicians include modern popular music trends in their renditions of changüí, older musicians, competition judges, and traditionalists feel that this is out of place. But it is a completely reasonable idea that the music should modernize while keeping its instrumentation in order to remain attractive to the next generation of musicians and partygoers. Ultimately, the judges decided that more traditional renditions of the genre would be valued more highly in a competition situation. Thus, the following song, *Gloria Eterna*, by Taveras took first place:

Oye Cambrón tú eres la figura de este festival
Chito, Mongolo y Arturo
Siempre estarán entre nosotros
Julio, Capullo y el compadrón José Luis
Montuno: Gloria eterna

Listen Cambrón, you are the figure of this festival
Chito [Latamblé], Mongolo [Miguel Quintana], and Arturo [Latamblé]
You will always be with us
Julio, Capullo [Mariano Hodelín], and our buddy José Luis
Refrain: Eternal glory

The major changes seen in the 1999 contest were: (1) a greater presence of younger musicians, (2) increased visibility and skill of female changüiseros, (3) an increase in musical groups and composers who participated overall, (4) an all-local panel of judges for the songwriting competition, (5) the addition of the tres competition with a panel of judges drawn from diverse yet related areas such as musicologists, treseros, and a luthier who specializes in making treses, (6) an elaborate awards ceremony and show for both competitions. The 2000 competition would see the innovations of younger musicians in a different light, with several groups of musicians both old and young now including timba breakdown figures in the climax of each changüí song.

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On a personal note, I had written a song for the competition that was performed by the members of Los Universales del Son who were not on the panel of judges. On November 30 and December 1, 1999, Los Universales del Son rehearsed the song at La Asociación del Son in La Loma Del Chivo. This was the culmination of an extremely instructive attempt at getting inside changüí composition. Several months earlier I wrote a changüí song, recorded it, and got it to Mongo. He made some rhythmic changes to the phrases because he felt they sounded too much like *El guararey de Pastora*, and when I arrived the group had it ready to go. Because Mongo and Marcelino were on the judges' panel, they could not play the song at the contest. However, the other musicians from the group were recruited. At both rehearsals, I saw how the group put pieces of music together and saw the importance of the moment when the lead voice enters to improvise. Additionally, a number of respected composers were on hand and gave their approval. Sometime in 2000 the song was recorded on Los Universales' new CD and released by the Spanish label, Envidia.

The 2000 Festival and Competitions

The 2000 Festival and its competitions differed in many ways from previous years, yet was affected by the same problems. First, a large opening gala and art exhibition was planned, complete with a formal invitation for registered participants and invitees. The festival seemed to have more events than ever and the schedule of performers and conferences was so tightly planned that it was impossible to attend every event. One highlight was a performance in the Loma del Chivo neighborhood by Elio Revé, Jr. and his deceased father's group. At this performance he was given an award for

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his father's contributions to Cuban music and culture that also commemorated the many years of Orquesta Revé's existence.

In the 2000 festival and competitions the changüí events had grown in scope and size. There were more changüí groups participating than in previous years. Many groups that I had seen in previous years had disbanded, splintered, and formed offshoots. There were no all-female groups, but a number of groups included women instrumentalists and singers. Again, youth made a strong showing: young musicians comprised the most interesting groups and composed the most interesting songs. One group, Sangre Changüisera, stood out from the pack with their dynamic stage presence and band uniforms. This was notable, because Estrellas Campesinas and Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo are the only other groups to perform in band uniforms (guayaberas and straw hats for the former, colored vests and shirts for the latter). In contrast, older changüiseros seemed to group themselves together into ensembles (such as El Changüí de Ñico Ya and Los Seguidores del Changüí) dedicated to performing older classics from the repertory as well as little-performed songs.

The first changüí event of the 2000 festival took place on December 1: an officially organized changüí party held at the Centro Comunitario de Cultura. Due to rain, the event was crammed into the front of the building. The main performance space with its stage and open-air seating were soaked because there was no roof. Once the rain stopped, the party continued indoors and the back served as an area for socializing and drinking. Unlike the competing musicians and composers, the vast majority of the competing dancers were older men and women at least in their 50s, 60s, and 70s. A

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number of groups from the municipios of Salvador, Manuel Tames, and Yateras performed at this event.

Due to more heavy rains the following evening, the changüí songwriting competition was also held in the smaller indoor lobby of the CCC. There were way too many people crammed into a small space, and matters were further complicated (although no one complained) because the dance contest was held at the same time as the songwriting contest. Thus, the dancers were dancing to the competing songs as they were performed. The judges for both the songwriting and dance competitions sat at a long table on the side of the room. In this and other competitions, professional musicians, particularly those affiliated with Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo and Los Universales del Son, were judges only and not contestants.

An unintended consequence of these logistical complications was that every song was performed acoustically; there was no space for microphones, amplifiers, or any kind of sound reinforcement. Thus there was an unintentional return to traditional performance practice: acoustic performance with dancers. Interestingly the timba breakdown figure was ubiquitous even in performances by Los Seguidores del Changüí, whose white-haired marímbula player blew a loud metal whistle when executing this figure.

While the songs were performed, the dancers danced and the male dancer in each competing couple wore a number pinned to his back. I sat on the floor trying to film the proceedings, a virtually impossible task. At one point during a break in the competition, a visiting couple from Holland danced changüí as an exhibition; the crowd was thrilled. Later, the couple explained to me that they saw Grupo Changüí in Europe and studied

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dance with Panchin and Bella, the dance team for the group. Normally, foreigners do not attend these events are but this year showed a marked increase in non-local attendees: in addition to the Dutch couple there were visitors from Chile and Mexico.

On December 3, the rain refused to let up so the competitions were moved to the Casa de Cultura on Calle Pedro A. Pérez. The sound was awful and both the tres and composition competitions were failures: many of the competing treseros did not have electric pickups on their instruments, and no amount of mixing could keep the microphones from feeding back. Many musicians, judges, and audience-members complained.

The idea for the tres competition was to have a steady group playing while, on each end of the stage, some 15 treseros took turns improvising on the song *Latamblé tocando el tres*. Feedback and poor sound quality made it frustrating to compete in and to watch. After numerous attempts to fix the sound, the tres contest was stopped. The bongo competition was much more successful, because the bongó is able to cut through practically any musical situation. The contestants played in a variety of styles with younger city-dwellers emphasizing rapid technique and fast rolls. At one point, a 12-year old boy from a children's changüí group showed some great chops if few musical ideas. During the competition, I asked Taveras why the contestants never executed the *bramido* (gliss). Stopping the competition, he asked them to do so.

The songwriting competition also suffered from sound problems and the dance contest was run simultaneously. By the end of the contest non-competing dancers packed the dancefloor. A North American friend who met me in Cuba had written a song that made it to the second round of the competition.

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Returning to Guantánamo, on Dec. 4, Alén and Casanova gave two papers in the recently renovated Casa Inciarte. Ana Victoria began with a presentation on changüí that had some wrong names and dates. The entire talk was laughable and reminded me of *Far Side* cartoons or jokes about the anthropologist telling the informant "Enough about you, let's talk about me." She was very defensive when corrected by a few changüiseros who were in the audience. Olavo's presentation was similarly weak and unsubtle, suggesting that Elio Revé was a changüisero by virtue of his capriciousness and way of behaving. Throughout his presentation the room quietly and gradually emptied of changüiseros; only local musicologists and a few foreign visitors remained. Throughout the presentation none of the musical examples was discussed from an analytic perspective. Subsequent discussion with the audience was lively as many locals were eager to debate, discuss, and correct aspects of the presentation. This time around however, Alén complimented the fierceness with which Guantanameros maintain their traditions, noting that other provinces are not as preservation-minded. Later when I suggested to him that musical analysis might aid in distinguishing what characteristics of Elio Revé's or Lilí Martínez' music were taken from changüí as practiced in Guantánamo, I was given an indirect dressing down. Olavo offered limited definitions of the word *history* and said that trying to do the work that I was doing was too time consuming; moreover it needed to be done by a Guantanamero. Later that day when I caught up with some of the musicians, who left the presentation, they expressed unfavorable assessments of the presentations, finding them irrelevant and condescending.

The tres and bongo competitions continued later that afternoon.

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Due to continuing rain, this event had a limited turnout of competitors as many lived a good distance away. However, the decision to perform acoustically tremendously improved the problems that had plagued the previous day's events. One group, the youthful Los Morenos del Changüí, provided the accompaniment for the diminished field of competing treseros and bongoceros. They had actually prepared an impressive song for their bongocero but were asked to just provide a simple regina while everyone improvised. The rains continued pouring after the competition, so I stayed behind and jammed with many younger musicians for at least an hour. During this "session" I was impressed by the younger changüiseros' familiarity with older changüí songs as well as other local variations.

Later that evening, the competition prizes were presented and given. Yoelvis Darromán, a resident of Guayacan and tresero for Los Universales del Son, won the tres competition. The top two bongoceros, Ruben Matos Fortin and Antonio Duverget sat at opposite ends of the room in front of an ad-hoc changüí ensemble for the final round of the competition. The crowd was excited as each musician took turns soloing in a kind of bongó cutting contest. One of the bongoceros broke his drum during his turn and after the other finished his solo he slid his intact instrument some 30 feet across the floor to his unfortunate rival. The winner, Ruben Matos Fortin, wound up with a new bongó de monte.

During the awards, the winning groups would perform their songs with the winning dance couples. The first prize in dance was awarded to an elegant older couple, Augustin Ribeaux Osorio and Felicita Bouli Portuondo. By the end, everyone was jamming and dancing, including myself.

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Los Morenos del Changüí, without Ariel Daudinot Brooks, took first place with their song *El zoologico de piedra* (the stone zoo), written by Pedro Vera Pagan:

Pero señores en Oriente
Por la parte de Yateras
Un campesino talló
Un zoológico de piedras
El pueblo quedó admirado
Cuando lo fueron a ver
Trabajando con un hacha
Un martillo y un cincel
Montuno: Señores vengan a ver el zoológico de piedra
Guía: Es una maravilla de las tantas de Yateras

Ladies and Gentleman, in Oriente
In Yateras, a peasant made
A stone zoo
The people stood in admiration
When they went to see it
Working with a hatchet
A hammer and a chisel
Refrain: Ladies and Gentlemen, come and see the stone zoo
Lead: It is one of the many marvels of Yateras

Sangre Changüisera won second place with *Mueve tu caballo* by the elder composers José Díaz Planes and Lázaro Durán Cardosa. The song is laden with Santería imagery:

En honor a tu salud
El padrino te dijo
Hazte un collar
Date una limpieza
Pero que tenga iría
Que no te llegue nada
Te estan tirando
Te estan tirando fuerte
Para que te embrume
Guía: El padrino te dice hijo ¡Hey!
Montuno: Mueve tu caballo
Guía: Cuidado con boca, cuidado con zaya ¡ Hey!
Montuno: Mueve tu caballo
Guía: Pon un traguito de ron al viejo ¡Hey!

In honor of your health

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The godfather told you
Make a [protective] necklace
Cleanse yourself [spiritually]
So that you have good fortune
And nothing will happen to you
They are doing harm to you
They are doing a lot of harm to you
So that you are hurt
Lead: The godfather tells you, son hey!
Refrain: Move your horse [to get mounted by your orisha]
Lead: Watch out for gossip, watch out for women, hey!
Refrain: Move your horse
Lead: Give a drink to your old one [honor your ancestral male spirit], hey!

Finally, Ariel Daudinot Brooks won third place with *Al sonero mayor*, an homenaje for Beny Moré:

Allá en la Perla del Sur
Nace un hombre en Santa Isabel de Las Lajas querida
Como rumbero magnífico
Como improvisador excepcional
Como sonero único Beny Moré
Montuno 1: Sonero único mundial de Santa Isabel de Las Lajas
Montuno 2: Sonero único mundial de Santa Isabel, Beny Moré

There in the Pearl of the South
A man was born in beloved Santa Isabel de Las Lajas
What a magnificent rumbero
What an exceptional improviser
The one and only sonero, Beny Moré
Refrain 1: The one and only world famous sonero from Santa Isabel de Las Lajas
Refrain 2: The one and only world famous sonero from Santa Isabel, Beny Moré

Whatever had prevented Grupo Changüí members from competing alongside younger musicians, the effect was dramatic. A more even playing field allowed younger musicians to take top prizes and share their vision of changüí with older observers and the general public. Many more young people were seen dancing throughout the days of the competition. Perhaps they will be sparked to participate as competitors in the 2001 dance competition.

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Conclusion

Recent forms of competition, as seen in the 1998-2000 festivals, differ from those of the pre-revolutionary past in that the past forms of competition, as embodied by Masó, Mosqueda, and others, were based on reputation and skill in improvising both melodies and lyrics. The public judged their abilities and remembered their music. Nevertheless, modern forms of competition can be seen as a way of preserving the competitive atmosphere that pervaded the legendary past of changüí performance. Newer forms of competition require short performances with judges. These modern competitions can help a musician's reputation, but they have more tangible prizes such as instruments and money. Three hundred pesos (first place), two hundred pesos (second place), and one hundred pesos (third place) are small amounts of money for non-Cubans and high-ranking Cuban bureaucrats who travel beyond Cuba's shores on a regular basis.[6] However, when one considers that a very good salary is around 275 pesos per month ($12.50), winning three hundred pesos is more than one month's salary. It is unclear if top-prize composers actually share some of their winnings with the group of musicians who perform the composer's song. At the competitions that I attended competitors never publicly discussed the monetary aspect of the prizes nor did they privately discuss this with me.[7] At the 1999 tres competition, the beautifully handcrafted tres given by Raúl Lage was discussed and viewed among the contest administrators. It was superior to all

[6] At 22 pesos to the U.S. dollar, the dollar value of each prize is $13.63, $9.09, and $4.54 respectively.

[7] One notable exception is the sad and oft-told story of a winning tres player who sold his new instrument for much-needed cash.

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of the instruments used in the competition, and the need for new instruments (and strings) was felt by all.

With each edition of the songwriting competition, it was clear that younger musicians and composers were improving rapidly, closing the generational gap amongst changüiseros. The 1999 competition was the defining moment in this process. Thanks to increased participation on the part of younger musicians, changüí appears to be enjoying a boom in Guantánamo. Through chops, choreography, and lyrical innovations from rap, there is no danger of changüí becoming an extinct or forgotten genre. For that matter, tumba francesa is enjoying a boom as well, due to the fact that there are many young changüiseros who perform with the folkloric music and dance troupe, Babul.

This brings us back to the issues raised in the judges' deliberations of 1998. Although local judges and others disagreed with non-local judges about whether to permit the mixing of musical elements from genres other than changüí, the process of change has been unstoppable and highly visible in a mere three years. It was most likely occurring before these three years of competitions, as indicated in song texts of Chapter 6, and will most likely continue into the future. As sincere as local judges are about instituting separate categories for early, traditional, and contemporary styles of changüí, this segregation of style has not come into reality. Seeing tradition-minded groups such as Ramón Gómez Blanco's Los Universales de Son and Julio Valier's Los Seguidores del Changüí executing timba breakdown figures in their performances shows how small stylistic changes permeate even the most 'traditional' musical practices.

It seemed that female changüiseros were poised to make a greater impact collectively, but the dissipation of all-female groups disproved this notion. Perhaps

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because of the increased presence of all-female groups at the 1998 and 1999 competitions, women were finally taken seriously by their male peers. Consequently, they were included as musicians in mixed-gender ensembles.

One of cultural director Carmen Lamorú's goals is to attract more national and international attention to the event. Similarly, Ramón Gómez wants to have wider participation in the competitions, including international and non-local changüí groups. The 2000 edition of the festival managed to receive national television announcements and was in the national news as well. Attendees for the 2000 festival came from Havana and Santiago, but also from Puerto Rico, New York, Chile, Mexico, Holland, and Suriname. Most of the international attendees were simply changüí fans and not musicologists. Mexican and Chilean visitors were hoping to initiate cultural exchange programs with musical groups in Guantánamo. If the rate of growth in terms of events and participants is any indication, future cultural festivals may be even larger in scope.

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Conclusion: Changüí, Son and the Pan-Caribbean Perspective

The study of changüí allows for careful consideration of several larger issues surrounding Cuban genre classification.[1] First, changüí possesses social, behavioral, and musical characteristics found in rumba, son, and música campesina, three of the generally accepted genre classifications. Second, although it shares certain qualities with these genre types, changüí, as practiced today, possesses its own unique and highly structured set of behavioral expectations that are distinct from those associated with son and perhaps closer to those associated with rumba and/or a guateque campesina (White Hispanic-Cuban musical gathering and party). These specific expectations include food, dance, musical duels, locations conducive to large gatherings, and long duration. Third, unlike the aforementioned genres, in contemporary practice changüí lyrics focus on historicity and self-referencing, emphasizing local phenomena. It is most likely that early son, in Havana and elsewhere, was accompanied by the types of activities that are traditionally part of the long parties associated with changüí; these include musical duels, roast pigs, and rum. Social aspects of the genre are not discussed in standard accounts of early son such as those by Argeliers León and Natalio Galán. Robin Moore discusses the importance of *academías de baile* (dance schools that doubled as brothels), *encerronas* ('lock-ins' where wealthy white politicians hired son groups to accompany their long orgies with women, food, and alcohol behind closed doors), and beer factory parties as

[1] To date James Robbins remains the single scholar who has best addressed issues of taxonomy in Cuban music. Although his study "Making Popular Music in Cuba: A Study of the Cuban Institutions of Musical Production and the Musical Life of Santiago de Cuba" was written in 1990 and does not take into account musical developments of the last twelve years, it is nonetheless important and should serve as a point of departure

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important sites for the development of the son in Havana.[2] These are each quite distinct from traditional changüí gatherings.

To some extent changüí and the dominant style of Cuban son (that developed in 1920s Havana and continues to thrive to this day) share some basic traits: use of the string instruments such as the tres, emphasis on percussion instruments, simple chordal harmony, call-and-response vocal patterns, syncopated Afro-Caribbean rhythms, and an accompanying dance performed by male/female couples touching one another throughout the dance choreography (as they do not in rumba). There the similarity ends; both have similar ingredients, but the resulting swing or groove created by the changüí ensemble's interlocking parts does not resemble the son groove. Musical transcriptions indicate quite clearly that the absence of clave, free bongó, relentless emphasis on upbeats, lyrical content, distinct choreography, unchanging musical texture, prescribed method for execution, and performance environment are all combined uniquely in changüí. These differences between son and changüí become apparent when listening to a changüí group perform.

A close examination of changüí reveals the true nature of the historical relationship between son and changüí and the distinct influences that shaped the two genres. Son's development is marked by musical practices in Oriente such as changüí, kiribá, and nengón, as well as by rumba from western Cuba (as evidenced by the clave) and by the social background of Havana. However, we have seen that from early on, son has developed quite distinctly from its rural pre-historic phase in Oriente. Today it has

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for any genre study in Cuban musical scholarship. In the next few pages Robbins' ideas will be explored vis-à-vis changüí, son, and genre classification.

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spawned its own variants such as salsa, *timba*, and *filin*, among others. In contrast, traditional changüí, as practiced today in Guantánamo, has remained relatively isolated in Oriente and largely unknown throughout the island. Unlike son, the instrumentation has remained constant for most of the last century. A few Guantanameros have capitalized on the genre's name, but adapting the genre's idiosyncratic traditional performance practices to commercial dance music without jettisoning key characteristics remains a difficult challenge. Finally, I suggest below that changüí's relative isolation from western Cuba and its openness to foreign influences from throughout the Caribbean, particularly Haiti, signals how changüí has certain sorts of connections to the rest of the Caribbean that son lacks. Once this idea is established, one can begin to conceptualize musical genres, and changüí in particular, from a broader pan-Caribbean perspective.

A Musical Comparison Between Changüí and Son

On one of the first nights during my first trip to Guantánamo, our group was taken to see a performance by Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. During a question and answer session with the ensemble, one of the trip's organizers asked a question that was on the minds of many foreign visitors: what is the difference between changüí and son? Later that week, Ramón Gómez presented some of the basic ways to distinguish the two genres. Since then, I have expanded upon those differences. Below, I present an outline that highlights the main differences between son and changüí, in order to better establish changüí's specific characteristics:

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[2] Robin Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 98-100.

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Table C.1
Historical Comparison of Changüí and Son Instrumentation

Time Period	**Changüí**	**Son**
Prior to 1920	Early changüí: bokú de monte, tres, guayo, maracas	Early son: guitar, tres, bongó de monte, tres, maracas, claves, cencerro (cowbell)
Early 1920s	Botija added, used as bass	Botija and/or marímbula added, used as bass
Mid 1920s-1929	Marímbula largely replaces botija	Botija and/or marímbula used as bass until bass violin replaces both
1930s-	Bongó de monte, tres, marímbula, guayo, maracas; unchanging within Guantánamo	Bongó with metal tuning lugs, bass, tres, trumpet, guitar, other instruments added as desired such as piano, tumbadora, *pailas* (timbales),

Table C.2
Comparison of Contemporary Changüí and Son Performance Practice

Characteristic	**Changüí**	**Son**
Harmonic Concept	Harmonically closed: Traditionally not many scalar or chromatic deviations beyond passing tones (in improvisation), primarily a two-chord harmonic structure (I-V)	Harmonically open: use of numerous harmonic conventions that include multi-part forms, upper chord-extensions, pedal tones, jazz influence, many harmonic possibilities
	Diatonic – mostly only triads	Rich Harmony
Bongó	Essentially free to improvise continuously	Has a fixed pattern known as martillo (hammer)
	Bramido (gliss) requisite during climax and decrescendo	No bramido
	Skin fastened to drum with tacks; tuned with heat; wide range of tones, closer to a conga drum	Tuned with metal tuning lugs; minimal range of tones

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Characteristic	Changüí	Son
Bongó (cont.)	Larger drums used for deeper pitches: Macho (smaller) held on right; Hembra (female) on left	Small drums used for higher pitches: Female (larger) held on right; Male (smaller) on left
Voice	Traditionally unison melodic pattern in the voices; sometimes thirds and fifths	More harmonic development in voices; often thirds and sixths
	Voice and tres in unison	Voice and tres independent
Tres	Traditionally initiates music	Any instrument can initiate music
	Pasos de calle obligatory	No pasos de calle or similar concept
	Always accompanies with arpeggios articulated on upbeats; tres only has melodic freedom during improvisation; rhythmically restricted	Tres is free to accompany as player desires, switching between single note obbligato and arpeggios, chords; rhythmically not restricted
Dance	Traditionally danced contratiempo	Not usually danced contratiempo in Havana and most of Cuba
Lyrics	Traditionally largely local concerns	Traditionally any topic
	Turns are executed with hands below shoulder level	Turns are executed with hands above shoulder level
Location	Traditionally performed at house parties, countryside/mountains; Today on stages as well	Traditionally performed at staged performances
Participation	Traditionally collective (includes audience); alternating musicians from public	Musicians only
Competition	Conducive to musical duels and staged competition	Conducive to musical competition, but rare
Timeline	No clave, no timeline to bind all parts; irregular phrasing	Clave binds all other instruments and all musical phrasing

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Characteristic	Changüí	Son
Structure of Performance	Traditionally a fixed sequence: tres initiates the music, ensemble enters, body of song rendered, vocal improvisation with call and response, tres solo, vocal improvisation, decrescendo	No fixed sequence, but usually adheres to a two-part canto-montuno form; any instrument can initiate the music.

Five of the aforementioned characteristics need to be singled out for explanation when discussing son. First, the bramido is only heard in early son recordings of the 1920s and early 1930s and is not heard or seen in subsequent son performances. Second, it is most likely that early son lyrics discussed local concerns, but current sones are aimed at wide audiences and cover more general themes. Third, as mentioned earlier, Robin Moore has presented compelling historical evidence about early son venues in 1920s Havana; these include private parties for wealthy white politicians and larger parties for Afrocubans at beer factories.[3] After the son becomes the national genre of Cuba, performance venues shift to nightclubs and stages. Fourth, it is most likely that early son emphasized collective participation. At a son performance today it is quite rare to see musicians jump from the sidelines and relieve a performer of his or her instrument; one would be likely to see this happen at a changüí performance. Finally, it is probable that early manifestations of son included prescribed opportunities for musical and or vocal competition during performance. Currently, son is conducive to competition, but it is rare and more likely to occur in música campesina or rumba.

[3] Ibid., 98-100.

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We can best understand the differences between son and changüí by looking at rhythmic aesthetics. Both changüí and son have their own distinct rhythmic aesthetics and corresponding levels of rhythmic and melodic freedom. Changüí can be characterized as rhythmically more free than son, but this freedom comes with conventions and limitations that must be strictly maintained to keep the musical structure intact and to create the genre's feeling of swing. The freely improvising bongó requires other instruments to maintain a relatively stable interpretation of the basic pulse because they are mostly articulating upbeats. The unvarying rhythmic texture of changüí tres solos best exemplifies the constraints of the genre: The entire rhythmic structure would be jeopardized and collapse if a tresero were to ignore the syncopated aesthetic and avoid offbeats by playing consecutive eighth notes. Similarly, the tresero could jeopardize the rhythmic structure if s/he pushes too far ahead or behind the beat. Improvising vocalists must also adhere to upbeats in their improvisations over the montuno.

The absence of a two-measure clave pattern gives composers and lyricists the opportunity to craft long melodic phrases that need not be symmetrical or last for an even number of measures. Pasos de calle also alter the lengths of phrases because they can be one- or two-bar patterns and they are obligatory in traditional changüí performance.

In contrast, the son's rhythmic aesthetic allows for more rhythmic freedom on the part of soloists and accompanists. All phrasing must adhere to the two-measure clave figure, even one-measure rhythmic patterns. The one-bar martillo pattern played by the son bongó is a steady eighth-note figure that accents beat four and coincides with the clave. Similarly, the steady eighth-note strumming of the guitar avoids the first beat. In a traditional changüí ensemble no instrument plays steady eighth notes. The traditional

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two-measure son bass pattern also avoids beat one and accentuates beat four at the end of each phrase.

Pre-composed melodies and texts must still adhere to the two-measure phrase of the clave. If a melodic phrase is not a multiple of two, the musicians must add a measure of silence or accompaniment before the next melodic line can be played. With this steady and relatively unsyncopated background, soloists and vocalists have considerable rhythmic freedom when improvising; manipulation of tension and release within this rigid rhythmic background is one mark of a successful sonero. Thus the overall swing of a son group is created by an emphasis on beat four and a playful push and pull with two-bar phrasing.

Changüí's emphasis on upbeats and its seemingly free rhythmic aesthetic make it more difficult to execute than son. Phrase lengths and pasos de calle are variable in length, but adherence to upbeats is unchanging. This combination of traits is probably the main reason why changüí has remained a more provincial, less widely cultivated genre. The centrality and explicitness of the son's clave makes the genre easier to dance to, execute, improvise, and compose: every action must be reconciled with the binary supremacy of the clave.

Changüí has a combination of idiosyncratic characteristics such as pasos de calle, voice-tres unison, contratiempo dancing, and a freely improvising bongó not found in son or any other genre of Cuban music. Most striking is the genre's emphasis on upbeats. Robert Farris Thompson has determined that short chopped patterns of speech and phrases of music are indicative of a Congolese heritage. At recent speaking engagements, Thompson often concludes his presentations by playing a recording of

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1950s mambo or other musical styles while explaining his theories in short clipped phrases that match the music.[4] Emphasis on contratiempo (offbeats) and síncopa (syncopation) is changüí's most distinct characteristic, perhaps indicating its derivation from Congolese or Bantu cultural practices in eastern Cuba. Fernando Ortiz determined that many Cuban instruments and musical practices are strongly linked to Bantu heritage. In Oriente some of these instruments include the bokú, *tumba de monte* (a drum played over a large hole dug into the ground), and the instruments used for tumba francesa. Accordingly, some genres reflecting Bantu roots include changüí, conga, and tumba francesa.[5] One recent example of Cuban scholarship, *Instrumentos de la música-folclórico popular de Cuba* (1997), looks at instrument diffusion as a means of understanding this rich legacy.[6] As seen in Chapters 1 and 2, the tres is the instrument that best exemplifies the emphasis on offbeats. Without the tres played in this fashion, there would be no changüí; some musicians feel that this instrument determines the character of the music.[7]

As quoted in Chapter 5, musicians from different generations agreed on maintaining changüí's instrumentation if not its traditional performance practices. Fidelity to using the bongó de monte is one conscious aesthetic decision, indicative of the desire to use traditional instrumentation. Bongoceros in Guantánamo who play trova, son, timba, música campesina (punto, etc.) —and there are many— use the bongó de llaves

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[4] Robert Farris Thompson, "Rumba, Samba, Mambo and Jazz: The Kongo Impact on the Dances of the Hemisphere" (paper presented at The CUNY Graduate Center and sponsored by the New York Open Center, November 16, 2000).
[5] Ortiz, *Instrumentos*, 36, 150.
[6] Victoria Eli Rodríguez, et al, *Instrumentos de la música folclórico-popular de Cuba, volumen 1*, (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1997), See maps.

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(with metal tuning lugs). I have only seen one changüí group where a bongocero uses an instrument with metal tuning lugs. One might infer that a bongó without tuning lugs is cheaper and more readily available; this is incorrect.[8] In fact, the changüí bongó is constructed like a conga with multiple staves of wood and takes a good deal of time to make. It is impossible to imitate a bongó de monte with a bongó that has metal tuning lugs; the skin must be loose to facilitate the bramido and the drum must be significantly larger than normal to produce lower pitches and deeper tones. The metal hardware weighs down the bongó de llave and inhibits open tones from ringing. Thus, the choice to use a bongó de monte is not based on price or availability; it is based on a sense of tradition and an established local aesthetic.

Robbins writes that even though rhythmic patterns are tied to specific instruments, different groups can play son without all of the instruments or patterns.[9] In a traditional changüí ensemble the maraca and guayo parts are essentially the same; one could be removed without losing the rhythmic sensibility of the music, but beyond this it is impossible to play changüí if all of the instruments or patterns are not present. Changüí has musical patterns that can be adapted to many genres, but there are few non-changüí musical patterns that can be adapted to changüí and strictly maintained.

Chapter 5 also shows that musicians based in the capital have tried to capture changüí's particular sound and swing/groove in their interpretations, but they have created something else. The results are often aimed at achieving commercial success

[7] Jesús Álvarez, telephone conversation with author, New York, 20 September 2001. New York.

[8] Interestingly, the bongocero for Estrellas Campesinas, a group heralded as typical of Yateras and rural changüí uses a worn bongo with metal tuning lugs, but at the 2000 bongó competition he borrowed someone's traditional instrument to compete.

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through novelty. They can also, however, create confusion for listeners while frustrating traditional changüiseros in Guantánamo who view these interpretations as son. Elio Revé's music is a good example of how genre, generic identifiers, and geographic origin are conflated. The end result is good popular Cuban dance music that really bears none of the social and musical characteristics of traditional changüí. Revé, born and raised in Guantánamo, labels his music changüí and is perceived by non-Guantanameros to be a changüisero because of his connection to Guantánamo.[10]

Historical Issues

Historically the cradle of Cuba's independence struggles, Oriente is still somewhat at odds with Western Cuba; discussions of changüí are bound to reflect this background. In any given country, individuals who write histories of their nation's music generally try to link specific trends into one coherent national history. In the United States jazz is alleged to have moved up the river from New Orleans to Chicago and elsewhere. Somehow the activities of musicians on the eastern seaboard and other locales don't fit into this common narrative too well. Regional differences aren't seriously explored, and it is seldom mentioned that regionally specific styles thrive and exist alongside the larger, national genre.

In Guantánamo, regional differences are explained and accentuated in studies, pamphlets by musicologists, and conversations with musicians. Similarly, changüí still thrives in Guantánamo and maintains its sonic and social differences from son. Despite fieldwork in Guantánamo, many Cuban scholars based in Havana group changüí into the

[9] Robbins, 373-74.

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son complex, because it supports the thesis that the son moved from the east to the west and developed as it swept across the nation. What is consistently ignored is that the son played in Havana since the 1920s sounds distinct from changüí, kiribá, or nengón as these genres are currently performed in Guantánamo or were historically performed. Similarities between son and changüí end with characteristics such as vocal call-and-response patterns, the use of a few instruments common to the two genres, an accompanying couple dance, simple harmonic patterns, and an emphasis on Afrocuban rhythms.

If they don't sound the same beyond these general features or share the same behavioral expectations, what makes them part of the same genre complex? As seen in Chapter 3, getting rid of regional distinctions helps portray a united national culture when this is not the case. Cuba, like the United States and many other countries, is a nation of immigrants. In the case of Guantánamo and much of eastern Cuba, Haitian and Anglophone-Caribbean migrants continue to make their presence felt in local musical culture. The influence of Afro-Haitian musical culture on son via nineteenth-century tumba francesa and musical forms brought by Haitian migrant workers at the beginning of the twentieth-century can be seen when changüí is compared with these genres. The effect on son of musical practices from Jamaica and other Anglophone-Caribbean islands such as Barbados needs to be further explored.

An examination of musical materials and recordings supports the local, linear view that changüí preceded son. As time passes, the traditional patterns discussed in Chapter 1 seem to have migrated to other instruments in the Havana son ensemble of the

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[10] Robbins spends a good deal of time insightfully exploring this specific issue, 385-90.

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1920s and after. The changüí bongó pattern and the son anticipated bass pattern are cognates. There is also a striking similarity between the changüí marímbula pattern and the son tumbadora pattern. The changüí guayo pattern is transformed into the standard bongó bell pattern in son.

Many local musicians do subscribe to the view that nengón and kiribá, as well as other types of regina, predate changüí and son. Some musicians such as José Díaz Planes feel that "the son takes from changüí; however no one could attribute a [precise] date when this [genre] or another [genre] was born."[11] As Marcelino Ruiz notes, "Nengón, kiribá, [and] regina are the base that changüí elaborated . . . all of these musics are types of son, each one at its own stage."[12] As a tresero, he is conscious of when he puts son licks, rhythms, and harmonies into a changüí performance noting that, "changüí must evolve."[13] This view echoes sentiments expressed by younger musicians such as Ariel Daudinot Brooks. But on other occasions Marcelino was quick to define changüí and articulated a major difference between son and changüí: "Changüí has five fundamental characteristics which are the llamada al montuno, the canto changüisero, the descargas changüisera, the climax de despedida, and changüí does not have accompaniment: in changüí the guitar is not used."[14]

[11] José Díaz Planes, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 13 August 1999: "El son toma del changüí; Sin embargo nadie pude definir fecha cuando nació éste y cuando nació otro."

[12] Marcelino Ruiz Hipólito, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 16 August 1999: "El nengón, el kiribá, la regina son la base que el changüí éste se elaboró; que toda esta música son un tipo de son cada cual a su etapa."

[13] Ibid.: "El changüí tiene que evolucionar."

[14] Marcelino Ruiz Hipólito, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 1 August 1997: "El changüí tiene cinco características fundamentals que son la llamada al montuno, el canto changüisero, la descargas changüisera, el climax de despedida, y el changüí no tiene acompañamiento: en el changüí no se usa guitarra."

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For changüiseros, local distinctions can be even finer and more specific. As seen in Chapter 5, groups from different counties do not sound the same. Changüiseros acknowledge that the genre and its variants were born in the mountains surrounding the city of Guantánamo. When visiting Guantánamo, one would be hard-pressed to designate certain zones of the city as urban, because rural settings are present within the urban environment. Urban changüiseros have rural aspirations in both their sound and presentation; rural areas such as Yateras, Guayacan, and Las Cidras are deemed good breeding grounds for changüiseros.

In the Introduction we see how some musicians, musicologists, and historians in Guantánamo have traced a linear progression from nengón to modern son. Linear presentations of musical history seem inevitable no matter how problematic they are. Noting how *guarachas*, verse-chorus songs of the nineteenth century, now have a montuno section, Robbins suggests "that the connection between contemporary and nineteenth century guarachas lies in the process of hybridization; [and] that contemporary guarachas might show some direct connection to the nineteenth century genre of the same name in their first parts and the montunos are later accretion."[15] This line of thinking could be used to understand the relationship between son and changüí: son is similar to changüí but perhaps only in so far as both have montuno sections. Perhaps the son's comparatively expanded instrumentation and harmony are later 'accretions.' Or one could follow this logic differently: if, as Giró suggests, the son played in Havana prior to the 1920s was derived from the canción, then perhaps it was through contact with

[15] Robbins, 393.

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changüí and its variants, as performed by migrant musicians from Oriente, that the refrain was added to Havana's son.

Musicians based in Havana have publicly acknowledged their debt to musical styles in Oriente and they also present other possibilities for how the son in Havana developed. In a 1952 *Bohemia* interview, Arsenio Rodríguez explained that the word *mambo* comes from a common phrase, "abre cuto güiri mambo" (open your ear and listen to what I am going to say to you) used in vocal *controversias* (competitions) in the *tambor de yuka* genre performed by people of Congolese descent in Oriente. Rodríguez further explained: "part of this [tambor de yuka] rhythm was played on the tres by Orientales."[16] He used this musical concept to create his interpretation of the *mambo*, which he called *diablo*. For Rodríguez the mambo was a repeated two-bar phrase that came during the climax at the final section of an arrangement, usually in the form of a horn-based riff.[17] Earlier in the same interview he gives other names for his understanding of the mambo-- as a repeated two-bar phrase--such as *chivo*, *capetillo*, and *son montuno*. To my ear, capetillo sounds like nengón, a variation of changüí considered to be its antecedent. [18]

Histories about how genres come about are important to musicians in Guantánamo, who see locally enjoyed (and derived) genres such as changüí, kiribá, and nengón as essential contributions to nationally appreciated music such as son. Making music is a creative process, and it would be a mistake to suggest that musicians in

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[16] Vicente Cubillas, Jr. "Habla Arsenio Rodríguez: ¡Ese maldito mambo!," *Bohemia* 7 diciembre 1952: 24.
[17] David García. Personal Communication.
[18] *Música tradicional spirituana*. Sonora Cubana/Yerba Buena/Virgin 850906-2 (2000) [Areito/Egrem 1986], track 5.

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Guantánamo spend all of their free time debating the origins of the son and the relationship between son and changüí. Writing about the invention of genres and their development, Robbins argues that:

> The invention of genres [as opposed to composition] . . . is regarded as important creative activity. This is demonstrated by the existence of a large number of 'origin myths' regarding genres. Individual compositions are part of these stories, but the importance of the compositions is their use as prototypes, not as special compositions in their own right.[19]

In the case of changüí it would be incorrect to suggest that specific compositions are only important in how they relate to the invention or historical development of genres. Throughout the province and beyond its boundaries, 'classic' changüí, kiribá, and nengón compositions are consistently performed. Musicians in Guantánamo—and Guantanameros abroad— acknowledge musical antecedents but they enjoy creating songs in these three related styles. Genre prototypes are taught and explained to aspiring musicians but musicians are not content to simply perform genre 'prototypes.'

National and Local Concerns

In his doctoral thesis, Robbins proposes four purposes for genre distinctions:

> [1] [Distinctions] are essential to the organization of the institutional structure [the state-run musical bureaucracy] . . . [2] Generic labels are used to convey technical information about music [for musicians] and, when appropriate, about dancing to it . . . [3] A third purpose of 'pigeonholing' is marketing . . . [4] A fourth use of genre labels is to make social distinctions.[20]

These points are excellent but not without intricacies and nuances that are brought into focus when looking at a specific genre such as changüí. Writing about festivals,

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[19] Robbins, 337.
[20] Ibid., 346-9

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Robbins suggests that, "Public perception of musical genres is reinforced at the 'nivel oficial' [official level] by maintaining a tradition of competitions within particular genres . . . and dedicating festivals to particular genres."[21] In the case of changüí, festivals and competitions don't necessarily reinforce the state's vision of how the public perceives the genre.

Chapter 6 demonstrates how the musical competitions and festivals in Guantánamo are important sites for witnessing musical change and debates over appropriate musical practices. Observation indicates that the relationship between the state and local concerns is problematic. The state supports changüí, yet the intricacies of how the genre is to be performed and conceived remain largely a local concern of musicians in Guantánamo, not one of musicologists and bureaucrats based in Havana. Ultimately it is locals who determine the character of the competitions and festivals and what exactly constitutes traditional musical practice. In general, monetary prizes for compositions and musicianship encourage participation from people of all generations. New generations look for ways to inhabit the tradition while being conscious of the reality of post-Soviet Cuba. Older generations of changüiseros are dedicated to rescuing and performing a repertoire of songs that have been largely forgotten. In some cases, young and old do not agree, but multi-generational groups are increasing. In competition settings, older, more-established changüí composers have won many prizes when groups made up of younger musicians perform their compositions. In recent years these competitions have had favorable results in involving women, something quite

[21] Ibid., 334.

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commonplace during the second stage of the genre's history. Most of the aforementioned local activities reflect local rather than state interests.

By highlighting east-west rivalries and the differences between their respective narratives of the son's development as well as the development of changüí and related genres, I do not wish to give the impression that these historical issues are by any means the central reasons for studying changüí. Nor do I wish to imply that there is a hegemonic conflation of changüí into a son complex that is perpetuated by Havana-based musicologists who write histories of Cuban music. Rather, the genre has been understudied and most of these musicologists have not spent time getting down and dirty with the music or doing significant ethnographic work in order to get beyond common generalizations.

Observing that cyclic patterns are common to Cuban music, Robbins writes, "it is not surprising that some of the most concrete generic distinctions are made by referring to such cycles."[22] Chapter 1 shows what these cycles are and how each instrument's part is essential to the cycle; the result is a "culturally specific" *matriz* (matrix), and the "perception of an overall pattern depends largely on what a listener is accustomed to hearing and regarding as important."[23] Scholars and musicians accustomed to Havana son and salsa may find it difficult to understand the changüí matriz on a musical level, e.g. how the individual parts relate, how one dances to the music, etc. This is largely because the genre has been dismissed as a mere variation of son without seriously investigating or analyzing changüí's unique musical features. For the most part, the

[22] Ibid., 367.
[23] Ibid., 372.

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average musician familiar with son and salsa has not spent any time with changüí or changüiseros; therefore much of the genre won't be musically logical.

The scarcity of ethnographic fieldwork pertaining to changüí shrouds in mystery any understanding of the social components specific to the genre's matriz, e.g. who the songs are about, why they are about these musicians and local phenomena. The study of changüí draws attention to contributions of inter-Caribbean migrants, particularly Haitians, to musical culture in Guantánamo and Oriente. Finally, through changüí the musical effects of east-west rivalry become easier to understand. All of the abovementioned considerations indicate that changüí merits consideration as its own musical complex; the construction of this musical complex includes variations and antecedents inside Guantánamo and variations outside of Guantánamo.

This study suggests that the classification of Cuban musical genres should be based on ethnography and musical analysis, rather than on organology and uncertain historical events. The implications of this study extend beyond the specific musical and cultural confines of changüí, Guantánamo, and Cuba to any locale, advocating a balanced ethnomusicological investigation of any genre.

For some musicians changüí is emblematic of identity. Marcelino Ruiz explains that, "this music forms part of our identity."[24] Bella states unequivocally that, "changüí is Guantánamo."[25] For Mario Zamora, a musician well versed in nueva trova and changüí:

[24] Marcelino Ruiz Hipólito, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 16 August 1999: "Esa música forma parte de nuestra identidad."
[25] Evelia "Bella" Noblet Colás, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba 21 December 1999: "El changüí es Guantánamo."

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> Changüí is the first, [it] is the older brother of our son. It is the most autochtonous music of Guantánamo, the most original that we have in our mountains. Our grandparents, our ancestors, all enjoyed [themselves] at parties in the countryside, at large parties that lasted two, three, even four and five days, dancing, drinking a lot, and dancing to a lot of changüí. [26]

Beyond Cuba: Changüí Within the Broader Pan-Caribbean Perspective

Thus far, the focus of this study has been to distinguish changüí from son by identifying its unique characteristics and to understand the problems with genre classification that are largely based on organology and a few other less substantial considerations. The time has come to reconsider the current system of Cuban musical genre classification and to view individual genres in relation to broader regional practices. Looking beyond Cuba, towards the rest of the Caribbean, it is appropriate to see changüí as part of a loosely related group of Creole genres such as Jamaican mento and Haitian mérengue, among others. This new genre classification could be called the Creole string band category that would extend beyond national boundaries.

In the United States the term *string band* indicates ensembles of guitars and fiddles. This configuration is not as common in the Caribbean; one notable exception is heard in Grand Cayman. I am using the term *string band* in a broad sense to include any ensemble in which the melody is played by one or more string instruments. Many Caribbean ensembles have two strings, one for bass and one for melody. Genres

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[26] Mario Zamora, interview by author, Guantánamo, Cuba, 1 August 1997: "El changüí es lo primario, es el hermano antecesor de nuestro son. Es la música mas autóctona de Guantánamo, lo mas original que tenemos en nuestra montaña. Nuestros abuelos , nuestros antepasados todos disfrutaban en fiesta del campo, en grandes fiestas que duraban dos, tres, hasta cuatro y cinco días bailando, tomando mucho y bailando mucho changüí."

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performed by such ensembles include son, punto guajiro, música jíbara, and calypso. Other Caribbean ensembles, that perform such genres such as changüí, mento, and méringue, have one string instrument playing the melody and a blown jug or lamellaphone for bass. In widening the meaning of the term we can group together genres that use single and double-coursed guitar-like instruments of the Spanish Caribbean (that often take their name from the number of courses such as the tres and cuatro) as well as instruments common to the English and French-speaking Caribbean such as the banjo and mandolin. Texture, instrumentation (emphasis on strings and percussion), basic harmonic conventions, emphasis on syncopated Afro-Caribbean rhythms, tempo, call-and-response vocal patterns, and couple-dance choreography are a few of the ways in which these seemingly disparate genres could arguably be viewed as part of a broader category.

Cuban scholars seem to fixate not only on classification, but also on the supremacy of the son. In *Música y descolonización* (1982), Cuban scholar Leo Acosta lists the genres that he sees as part of broader international groupings, but when he articulates some of his pan-regional conceptualizations of Caribbean music the exercise fails, largely because Acosta designates the Caribbean as the area of the son, North America as the area of jazz, and Brazil as the area of samba.[27] Acosta justifies son as the genre that "contains more than any other [Cuban] genre the essence of our popular music."[28] Admittedly, Acosta goes too far, when he designates all of the Caribbean as the area of son, just to explore relationships between the Caribbean, North and South

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[27] Leonardo Acosta, *Música y descolonización* (La Habana: Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1982), 204-210.

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America.[29] One unfortunate consequence of Acosta's conceptualization of the Caribbean, and the Afro-Americas, is that there are no allowances for types of musical activities and genres that African-Americans have historically been involved in other than popular or folk musics. Art music, work songs, and religious music are excluded, and we have too much information about these styles to dismiss them.

Although it is distorting, clearly the notion of the son complex is useful for pedagogical purposes. Perhaps in the future, Caribbean specialists can look at genre families beyond geographic boundaries. Some scholars, such as Jocelyn Guilbault and Peter Manuel, have already begun to conceptualize the Caribbean in broader terms, and Cuban scholars such as Danilo Orozco emphasize such an approach. Inter-Caribbean migration has been extensive and not limited to Cuba. Additional pan-Caribbean stylistic themes such as Caribbean drum and dance traditions (Panamanian tamborito, Guadeloupean gwo-ka, Martinican bèlè, Puerto Rican bomba, Cuban tumba francesa and rumba), Caribbean frame drum genres (Puerto Rican plena and Haitian tambuyé, among others), and musical competitions could encompass a variety of genre classifications not limited to the shores of each island. As the saying suggests, no man is an island. In reality, no island is an island, and historically the Caribbean has been linked more closely than generally recognized by musicologists. It is not within the scope of this study to make generalizations and speculations about pan-Caribbean musical culture. Rather, this investigation of changüí aims at focusing on a specific genre, in a specific locale. It is

[28] Ibid, 207: "contiene más que ningún otro género lo esencial de nuestra música popular."
[29] Ibid, 208.

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my hope that other scholars will be able to make use of this study as a tool for making such larger, and necessary, pan-regional generalizations.

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Sitio del Gobierno de la República de Cuba. < http://www.cubagob.cu/mapa.html >.

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Videos

Historia del son. Caribe Video, CV-001, 1998. 60 minutes. Videocassette.

Revé Y Su Charangón. Producciones Pelusa 1104, 1998. 90 minutes. Videocassette.

Roots Of Rhythm: A Worldwide Celebration Of Latin Music From Africa To The Caribbean And America - With Harry Belafonte (3 Video Set). Cultural Research And Communication, Inc. in association with KCET/Los Angeles, 1989. 180 minutes. Videocassette. Produced and Directed by Howard Dratch and Eugene Rosow.

Sones Cubanos. Mundo Latino, N.D. 60 minutes. Videocassette.

What's Cuba Playing At? [¿Qué se toca Cuba?] Arena/BBC LMA L024H, 1985. 60 minutes. Videocassette.

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Discography

Guantánamo is still the best place to hear changüí, but for those who can't make the long and hard journey recordings will suffice. There are few commercially available changüí recordings at the time of this writing. What follows is a list of CDs and LPs that are accessible with persistence:

¡Ahora Sí! Here Comes Changüí. Liner Notes by Danilo Orozco. Corazón Records CORA121. Compact Disc. 1994.
Recorded in June and July of 1985 and in the early 1990s, this album includes performances by Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, Estrellas Campesinas, El Septeto Típico de Guantánamo (now Los Universales del Son), Changüí de La Maya, and an example of nengón from Orozco's field recordings.

Antología de la música afrocubana, Vol. 7: Tumba Francesa. Liner notes by Olvo Alén Rodríguez. La Habana: Egrem/Areito LD-3606. Phonorecord. 1981.
This LP was recorded in Guantánamo at the tumba francesa society, Santa Catalina de Riccis La Pomadú.

Banrrará. *Con sabor al guaso.* San Francisco: Salsablanca ?. Compact disc. 1999.
This is the first studio recording by Banrrará and it features changüí, son nengón and Afro-Haitian genres, such as tajona.

Cancionero Hispano-Cubano. Liner notes by María Teresa Linares. La Habana: Areito LDA-3326. Phonorecord. 1970.
This record contains many examples of música campesina and one example of sucu-sucu from the Isle of Pines/Youth (side B, track 8).

Changüí. Liner Notes by Dita Sullivan. New York: Traditional Crossroads CD 4290. Compact disc. 1999.
This recording is fraught with misinformation and wild musings in which Celtic mythology and Cuban music share more similarities than differences. The recording quality is thin, but the recording has the advantage of having multiple versions of songs so that the listener can hear the differences between urban and rural changüí.

Chappottin, Felix y Sus Estrellas. *Canta: Miguelito Cuni, Piano: Luis Lili Martínez.* 1958. Santo Domingo: Bongo Latino CDB-010. Compact disc. 1994.
This recording offers good examples of Lili's adaptation of nengón to the son conjunto format.

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Cisneros, Lorenzo "Topete." *Changüiseando a la trova y al son*. Barcelona: Ayva Música AV003. Compact disc. 1998.
A Havana-based musician from Guantánamo who mixes changüí with nueva trova.

Cotó y Su Eco del Caribe. *A mi yemaya*. La Habana: EGREM CD 0254. Compact disc. 1997.
Cotó (Juan de la Cruz Antomarchi) is a Guantánamo native and arguably the best tresero in the world. This CD features his interesting interpretation of changüí.

Cuba. Paris: Air Mail Music SA141024. Compact disc. 1997.
Although devoid of information, this CD provides excellent examples of tumba francesa, changüí, and Afro-Haitian folk music as performed by musicians in Guantánamo. These musicians include Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, Tumba Francesa Santa Catalina de Riccis, and an unknown Afro-Haitian group as well as a son group.

Cuba: Música campesina. Liner notes by Herman C. Vuylsteke. Paris: Ethnic B6758. Compact disc. 1992.
This CD contains excellent examples of música campesina including punto and zapatéo.

Cuba in Washington. Liner Notes by Danilo Orozco, Jésus Blanco, René López. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Folkways SFCD40461. Compact disc. 1989.
This live recording shows how the next generation of musicians are incorporated into Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. One of the audible differences is an increased speed of performance.

Cuban Counterpoint: History of the Son Montuno. Liner notes by Morton Marks. Cambridge, Massachussets: Rounder Records CD 1078. Compact Disc. 1992
This CD has an excellent example of traditional changüí, recorded in 1970s Havana. The group is called Los Tutankamen and the track seems to contain the end of one song and the beginning of *La muerte es muy natural*. When I played this track for Marcelino Ruiz in 2000, he remembered who the musicians and singer were.

Cubanismo. *Reencarnación*. London: Hannibal HNCD 1429. Compact disc. 1997
Contains a Cuban big band recording of Cotó's changüí.

Cutumba. *Cutumba: Ballet folklórico*. Havana: Egrem CD0256. Compact Disc. 1997.
This CD prominently features Afro-Haitian religious and secular musics in addition to batá drumming and rumba. The group is a well-known folkloric ensemble from Santiago de Cuba.

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Descarga Boricua. *¡Ésta, Sí Va!* San Juan: TierrazoTH15A/B. Compact disc. 1992.
This two-CD recording features a salsa version of Ido Torres' *Latamblé tocando el tres,* recorded here as *La rumba está buena.*

Estrellas de Chocolate. *Los inéditos 'en vivo'.* DC Productions CD 9205. Compact disc. N.D. [1950s]
Recorded by one of Havana's greatest conjunto de son, this CD features Luis "Lili" Martínez Griñan's compositions, one of which details a long changüí party and the musicians present.

La Familia Valeria-Miranda. *Integral del son: bases históricas.* Liner Notes by Danilo Orozco. Santiago de Cuba: Egrem LD-286, LD-287. Phonorecord. 1979.
Danilo Orozco's important field recordings of nengón, rumbita and other variations of changüí are now available on two CDs, minus the original liner notes.

La Familia Valera-Miranda. Cuba. Paris: Ocora/Radio France C57062. Compact disc. 1997.
This recording demonstrates how the songs from Orozco's field recordings are performed in a contemporary setting by the succeeding generations of the Valera-Miranda family.

Formell, Juan y Los Van Van. *Juan Formell y Los Van Van.* La Habana: Areito LD-3471. Phonorecord. 1973.
Contains the hit version of *El Guararey de Pastora.*

Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. *Fiesta changüisera.* Liner Notes by Danilo Orozco. La Habana: Siboney/Egrem C274. Phonorecord. [1983] 1996.
This recording of the classic lineup of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo included Chito Latamblé, Cambrón, Pedro Speck, Nino Olivares, Ñico Ya, and Taveras.

Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. *Bongó de Monte.* Liner Notes by Santiago Moreaux Jardines. Havana: Egrem CD0356. Compact disc. 1999.
This is the most recent studio recording by the current line-up of Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. It includes long vocal improvisations and songs heard in recent state-sponsored musical competitions.

Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. *La rumba está buena.* Disky DC640752. Compact disc. 2001.
An excellent early 1990s recording made by the same musicians who traveled to Washington, D.C. in 1989. The last two songs feature the original members.

Grupo Vocal Desandann. *Descendants.* Bembé Records 2022-2. Compact disc. 1997.
This CD provides excellent examples of Afro-Haitian folksongs and popular music found in Oriente. The group sings a capella and is based in Santiago de Cuba.

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El Guayabero. *Faustino Oramas y sus sones*. La Habana: Bis Music CD-111. Compact disc. 1995.
This CD features El Guayabero's best-known reginas and vocal improvisations.

Mento, Merengue, Méringue: Country Dance Music from Jamaica, Grand Cayman, Haiti and The Dominican Republic. Liner Notes by John Storm Roberts. Tivoli, NY: Original Music OMCD028. Compact disc. 1995.

Los Morenos del Changüí. *Los Morenos del Changüí*. San Francisco: Boogalu Productions. Compact disc. 1997.
This recording features Ariel Daudinot Brooks and Pedro Vera, Chito Latamblé's replacement in Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. Daudinot's experimental, yet traditional changüí vision is audible on four tracks.

Música tradicional spirituana. Areito/Egrem 1986. Sonora Cubana/Yerba Buena/Virgin 850906-2. Compact disc. 1998.
Track 5 is an example of *capetillo*, a genre that sounds exactly like nengón.

Orquesta Revé. *Rumberos Latino Americanos*. Québec: Habacan HABCD-2407. Compact disc. 1992.
Epoca de oro. La Habana: Caribe Productions/Egrem CD-9441. Compact disc. 1994.
Suave Suave + 3. Discos Habanos. DHCD 002. N.D. Compact disc. [1990s].
These CDs contain great examples of Revé's changing interpretations of changüí from the 1950s charanga sound to the present Cuban salsa style.

Rodríguez, Arsenio. *Dundunbanza 1946-1951*. Liner notes by Max Salazar. Barcelona: Tumbao Cuban Classics TCD043. Compact disc. 1994.
More examples of Lili's arrangements, compositions and unique accompanying techniques.

Sexteto y Septeto Habanero. *Grabaciones Completas 1925-1931*, 4 CDs.
Accompanying liner notes and photos *Las raices del son* by Sénen Suárez. Barcelona: Tumbao Cuban Classics TCD300. Compact disc. 1998.
This 4-CD set provides excellent information on this important group of son pioneers and articulates the major points about the genre and the group's development.

Son 14. *Son como son*. Areito/Egrem LD3964. Liner notes by Frank Fernández. Phonorecord. 1981.
Although there are no examples of changüí on this record, there are numerous mentions of Chito Latamblé and Guantánamo. The band features Pancho Amat, the tresero who would travel to Guantánamo to study with Latamblé, allegedly leaving unable to play changüí.

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Los Universales del Son. *Guateque en Yateras (Changüí).* Liner notes by Luis A. Domínguez. Barcelona: Envidia A707033. Compact disc. 2000.
This CD contains excellent examples of changüí, nengón, kiribá, and regina as well as *Oyeme criticón*, my entry for the 1999 changüí composition contest.

Veloso, Abelardo y La Orquesta Sensación. Guajiro de Cunagua ARO 107. Phonorecord. N.D. [1950s]
Rereleased on CD in the 1990s as *Bruca Manigua* ARO CD108, this CD features a charanga-style changüí à la Revé.

It is quite common to find second and third-generation cassette copies of various changüí groups such as El Septeto Típico de Guantánamo, Los Universales del Son, Los Seguidores del Changüí, and other groups.

Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. *Competition Reel.* Guantánamo, N.P. Reel to Reel. 1997.

Los Seguidores del Changüí. *Selected Changüí Songs*. Guantánamo, N.P. Audiocassette. N.D. [late 1990s].

El Septeto Tipico de Guantánamo. *Selected Changüí Songs*. Guantánamo, N.P. Audiocassette. N.D. [late 1990s]

Los Universales del Son. *Selected Changüí Songs*. Guantánamo, N.P. Audiocassette. N.D. [2000].

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Glossary

bongó de monte (literally 'mountain bongó,' a bongó without tuning lugs). The bongó de monte is larger than those found in son and salsa groups. The drumheads are made of goat skin and tacked on to the wood body with small nails. The instrument has no tuning lugs and is tuned with flames. Usually just the *macho* (male, smaller head) is tuned. The pitches of the skins are lower than son bongos and even lower than most *tumbadoras* (conga drums).

botija or *botijuela* - (clay jug) in changüí it was the bass instrument of choice prior to the marímbula; today it is used only for folkloric presentations.

bramido (gliss) - This is a howling or moaning sound produced by pushing one's fingertips across the drumhead and it is characteristic of the climax section of a changüí performance.

canto changüisero - main body of a changüí song

controversia – Musical duel between two singers

descarga – a general term for improvisation. In the changüí context this refers to a solo improvisation by tres players. With the recent advent of competitions the term is also applied to bongó solo improvisations. The descarga is optional in early changüí.

contratiempo - upbeats

ejecución colectiva (collective execution) - This means that every other instrument in the ensemble will enter at the same time. It is common for either the guayo player or the *maraquero* (maracas player) to give the ensemble a vocal cue in the form of a shout prior to the *ejecución colectiva.*

Estudiantina - An early twentieth-century ensemble traditionally consisting of two treses, clave, pailas (timbales), bass, trumpet, and a wooden güiro. The term originally referred to groups of students who performed in large groups. Estudiantinas traditionally played a wide variety of genres including, but not limited to son and danzón. Based in Santiago de Cuba, Estudiantina Invasora is the best-known exponent last remaining exponent of the estudiantina style

guayo or *guallo* - similar in shape and construction to the Dominican *güira*, it is a metal scraper which is usually scraped with a single metal rod, bone, or similar object

homenajes (homages) - Musicians are often eulogized in these songs

kiribá – another variant of changüí said to originate in Baracoa

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llamada de montuno (literally 'call of the mountain' this refers to a repeated section called the *montuno*) two or three times; this opening melodic/rhythmic pattern played by the tres is the same as the choral refrain.

marímbula or *marimba* is a large lamellaphone of Bantu origin, which functions as the bass instrument in the ensemble. The performer sits on top of the instrument with his or her legs apart and places the hands between them to play the keys. The hand positions are constantly changing, because one hand normally strikes the front of the instrument *para llevar el tiempo*, "to lift or carry the time."

nengón – a variant of changüí said to originate in Baracoa

pasos de calle (literally 'crossing the street') The tres is obligated to play these figures between each line of the verse. These are arpeggiations of whichever triad a line of the verse ends on, usually tonic, dominant, or subdominant. While these figures are cadential they also serve to prepare the singer for the next line. These are easily audible between each line of verse.

regina – a fixed repeated refrain and melody that improvisers sing between improvised verses

síncopa – syncopation

tres - An instrument in the guitar family with three double courses. The course closest to the player's head is tuned in octaves with the higher, lighter gauged string on the outside and the heavier lower pitched string below it. The center course consists of two strings in unison, and the top two (furthest from the player's head) are positioned so as to mirror the bottom two strings. The most common tuning is gG-cc-Ee.

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