

REFLECTING PAPER

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I'm so grateful to be part of the Berklee Global Jazz Institute as a Master Student. I really strong believe that I am in the right place to explore and develop my journey as a musician. When I started the program I felt that my Culminating Experience would be something that would improve my skills as a musician, human being and find a connection between my life and jazz.

During the whole year at The Global Jazz Institute we explored the African diaspora and how elements from that culture were into. That is why I decided to explore my roots, so I composed my music based on a tradition called Bullerengue. It comes from the Caribbean region of Colombia shared with Panamá. This music came up from the musical tradition of African slaves in America and is a syncretism which means that is a merging of different cultures, in this case the African, native Indigenous and Spanish culture. Bullerengue is an expression that describes the daily life of people, and evokes the spiritual and magical part of African Culture.

During the Spanish Colonization many of the African Slaves escaped from Cartagena Colombia, it was the main port of slavery in America. They founded San Basilio de Palenque, the first free town in the Americas. It is Located one hour from Cartagena, and is one of the most historic cities in Colombia and has been able to preserve the customs of their African ancestors. These ancient traditions include language, Religion, food, style of dress, instruments, and music.

Two years ago I had the opportunity to go to Palenque and do a small research project about the culture. This year looking for new material and a good experience for my CE project, I went back with the desire to live, understand and learn more about the culture and the music.

With the idea to create and record a project where I could explore new sounds, I chose musicians with different musical and culture backgrounds in the instrumental aspect such as Fares Ishaq from Palestine that plays Arabic Flute *Nai*, Vasilis Kostas from Greece that plays *Laouto* or Jacob Means from USA that plays *Mandolin*. For the process I knew that if I wanted musicians from other traditions play Bullerengue music I had to explain and show them my investigation, that is why I did some workshops with these musicians where I could teach them about, historical aspects, cultural aspects and musical elements of Bullerengue. During this process I could improve my teaching skills and also I learned about the musicians and how their instruments work, something awesome was to find connections between Bullerengue and the traditional music they used to play.

Being at the masters allowed me to explore my compositional skills, with my advisor Bruno Raberg I found different ways to composed, basically I used the experience traveling and learning about the culture to put that in my music. For the compositional process I used the most prominent rythms that I learned in Palenque. For Example The first song is called "Ritual", when I composed this song I was inspire by the traditional Death ritual in Palenque called Lumbú, When someone dies the ritual starts and is a way

to commemorate the life of the person who died. So all the town gets together and prays, plays music, eats and drinks for 9 nights. The traditional rhythm that I used is Called Bullerengue sentao. for this I took some Chords from "Fire Ball" by Stravinsky, this sounds and chords remind me something big, dark and death.

For the Second song I used the rhythm called Fandango de Lengua. The name of the composition is fandango the Luna. I was inspired by the nature of the place on the last day of the trip that I did this year when I was going from Palenque to Cartagena in a motorbike, so I could see the night with the moon in my right side and the day with the sunset to the left side, at the same time. I wanted to represent something sublime. I used a modal Harmony for this song.

The third song Is Well you needn't I did a pattern in 15/8 using the fandango rhythm. Well you needn't was the first jazz tune that I learned and is one of my favorites. composed by Thelonious Monk. This song means freedom and it was an interesting and funny process recording this.

The last song Is called Macaco. Is based on the Rhythm called Chalupa and the traditional song called Macaco Mata el Toro. In this song I used the traditional chords of the traditional song and son Arabic scales for improvisation.

Talking about the recording process, I had the incredible opportunity to lead and record my own music. I put all the effort to create a good environment, so with musicians and

the production team we did a good job. It taught me a lot about recording and mixing processes. Also manage people gave me the opportunity to bring all my personality as a human being, helping people, and giving them all the things that they needed to feel comfortable during the recording.

This experience created a beautiful connection with my teachers, classmates and the Berklee community.

As an educator, one of my goals with this project was to teach the musicians involved about Colombian musical traditions. As a performer, I had the opportunity to investigate and find new sounds from the variety of new instruments I included in the project. I planned for the process to be an experiment where I allowed creativity and exploration to shape my sound.

Now, future mission is to share my knowledge of Colombian musical traditions within different scenarios such as: arts and cultural festivals, music symposiums, workshops outreach and school programs.

I believe these musical traditions, and their multicultural properties, can help build a more aware society where we can understand each other. In this way the project supports my ideas and objectives that I wish to have as a holistic musician such as:

- To collaborate supporting human development and understanding through music.
- To bring and innovate new music to Berklee through the performance, composition and production experience with musicians from all over the world.

- To create new spaces for researching about how you can understand music through culture and vice versa.
- To promote cultural awareness and help people find pride in their own heritage the way I did with learning about my musical tradition and jazz.
- To spread my message of strength in diversity and inclusion.
- To foster music as a tool for social change through multicultural encounters that promote values for the enrichment of society.
- To encourage people to have ambition and drive to educate themselves and others.

Finally, I am so grateful to attend Berklee because I have found extraordinary things that have helped to strengthen my music career, therefore I want to inspire people from the Berklee community and share my knowledge I have built and acquired during my journey. As Berklee was founded on jazz and popular music rooted in the African cultural diaspora, my project is unifying research and musical elements that contribute to this. I consider that my teaching, researching and musical skills and experience can contribute to Berklee's educational environment.