

**Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)**

By

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The *Culminating Experience* written report

Music Technology Innovation  
Masters Program

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In December of 2011, I created a project called *Gerami Groover Presents*. This project consists of musicians, visual artists and dancers whose mission is to reveal the sounds of the Afro folkloric and contemporary styles of Latin music to the world. With this project, my goal is to reinvent how artists will compose, produce and perform within this genre of music by incorporating various applications of technology. The idea of emerging technology with this traditional style of music will provide more opportunities for the music to be heard, become more appealing and accessible to the ever-evolving market of consumers. During the academic year of 2013-2014, I had the honor of producing a new project entitled **Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)**. This project was produced in the city of Valencia, Spain. It involved students, faculty, and visiting artists of Berklee College of Music (Valencia, Spain), as well as a diverse group of local musicians and artist from the Valencia area. Together we revealed the Afro folkloric, and contemporary music styles of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Peru, and Spain to the world with the immersion of technology.

**Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)** was completed in four phases, studio recordings of four compositions, one music video to accompany one of the four studio recordings, an application for IOS devices, and a short documentary that provides a deeper explanation of how this project was created, as well as provide interviews of all the musicians and artist involved in the creation of this project.

There are four studio recordings that were created for the **Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)**. Each composition revealed one of the Afro folkloric or contemporary music styles of Latin music in the countries of Peru, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Spain. The four compositions were produced in a variety of digital audio workstations, such as

Pro Tools 10 and 11, and had a stronger emphasis of production in Ableton Live. I chose Ableton Live as my preferred digital audio workstation for this project for its heavy production techniques that are generally used in the production of Electronic Dance Music and DJ performance. My goal was to discover how to apply these same production techniques used in Ableton for Electronic Dance Music and incorporate these techniques in my productions within the genre of Latin music. The goal was to effectively implement these production techniques and still produce music that sonically remains authentic to the various Afro folkloric and contemporary Latin styles of music.

There were two compositions that I believed helped shape my ideas as a producer, and really expand the possibilities of how the Afro folkloric, and contemporary music styles of Latin music can be composed, produced and performed in the future, *Llora* and *Lola*. As a producer, I approached these two pieces of work in two ways. First, my goal was to just explore, to create music without any boundaries so that I may challenge myself creatively, in hopes of creating a piece of music that is unique. The second, was to use whatever resources I might have had access to at that very moment. In both compositions, I used a variety of audio samples or recordings of which I have had in my music library. I then combined them together in Ableton Live and produced music in one sitting until the various samples and recordings organically formed into a composition.

*Llora*, is an arrangement that I created within the style of Rumba Flamenca. Rumba Flamenca is one of a variety of Flamenco rhythms from Spain. This particular style is a combination of two folkloric rhythms that share African influences, the Spanish Tango, and Afro Cuban Rumba. I collected audio samples that I had personally recorded and audio recordings of Spanish flamenco percussion, claps, vocal samples and combined them with Afro

Cuban Rumba vocal samples, and percussion samples that I had recorded in the past. The goal of *Llora* was to successfully dissect the Rumba Flamenca style back to its origins of Spanish Tango and Afro Cuban Rumba, and once again merge these two folkloric styles together, and successfully create a piece that sonically best represents the Rumba Flamenca as if a band were to have record it or play it live.

*Lola*, was an original composition that was inspired by the Afro folkloric styles of Festejo and Lando from Peru. I used the same production approach with this piece as I had done before with the Rumba Flamenca, which was to just explore, to create music without any boundaries so that I may challenge myself creatively, in hopes of creating a piece of music that is unique. Also, I decided to use the resources that I have had access to at that very moment, such as a variety of audio samples in my music library. This piece was produced entirely in Ableton Live. I used a variety of percussion audio samples of the Cajon, which is an instrument that plays a very intricate role sonically in all Afro Peruvian folkloric styles of music. I used vocal, and guitar samples from “Takiti Taki” by Susana Baca, “Quimba Fa, Malambo, Neque” by Eva Ayllon. I also recorded a live vocal improvisation of Michael Sean Harris, a producer from Jamaica, and took samples of his improve to create a melody for the piece. *Lola* not only allowed me to grow and expand my talents as a producer in Latin music but it also introduced me to the area of sound design, an area of production I had not discovered until the creation of this tune.

*Maquinolanderá* is a song that is in the style of an Afro Puerto Rican rhythm called Bomba. There are four main rhythms of Bomba: Yubá, Sicá, Cuembé, and Holandé. Throughout the different areas of Puerto Rico you will hear a different interpretation of how these four rhythms can be played. *Maquinolanderá* is played in the Bomba rhythm of Sicá.

This tune was originally recorded by Ismael Rivera and Rafael Cortijo, and was one of the first fusions of salsa music with Afro folkloric rhythms from the Caribbean. I created an arrangement of this tune in Pro Tools 10 and 11. The creation of the arrangement was in two phases. I used a piano and a few percussion audio samples that I had recorded in a non-related recording session, and later recorded other musicians to record bass, vocals, and woodwinds live in the studio. *Maquinolanderá* features Alexey Leon Reyes on vocals, flute, and alto saxophone.

*Buleria*, was one of my favorite recordings. It is an original composition that I co-written with a phenomenal flamenco percussionist by the name of Sergio Martinez. The piece was composed in the Spanish Flamenco style of Buleria, and incorporated many elements from American Jazz music, which as a result provided a contemporary interpretation of this folkloric style. The recording process for *Buleria* was very traditional, and I engineered the session using Pro Tools 10 and 11. The piece was recorded in one session, and was recorded live by the students of the Berklee College of Music Global Jazz Institute, and Berklee alumni from both Spain and India. The musicians that participated in all of the **Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)** studio recordings, were students, faculty and visiting artist of Berklee College of Music in Valencia, Spain, as well as local musicians in Valencia, Spain. All studio recordings were held at the campus of Berklee College of Music in Valencia, Spain.

It was important for me to provide visual content for the **Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)** project. It was truly my desire to not only challenge myself as a producer sonically with this project but visually as well. I decided to direct a music video for *Lola*. This video featured Michael Sean Harris and a variety of archival images of the

Afro Peruvian communities in Peru. The video covers a variety of shots such as, establishing, left, right, mid, and bird eye angles. I hope that the music video will provide the viewers with more of a cultural context of where this music originated.

I wanted to explore how I can create this archive that can store all of the various Afro folkloric and contemporary styles of Latin music that *Gerami Groover Presents* is doing, and provide access to any one in the world who desires to learn more about the music, dance, and cultures in Latin America. So I decided to collaborate with Alek Palmersmith, and Sergio Martinez to create a *Gerami Groover Presents* app for IOS devices. This app will serve as a learning tool for anyone interested in learning the Flamenco and Andalucía music from Spain. It will cover everything from video tutorials, interviews, music, music videos, and much more. The app will be submitted in the **culminating experience** project for **Alek Palmersmith**, and will be presented in its early prototype stage.

Finally, there will be a short documentary for **Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)**. The documentary takes the viewers on a journey of the creative process of the project from my perspective, as the producer. There the viewers will witness behind the scenes footage of the creation of the project, as well as some history of how the vision of the project came into existence. In the future, there will be a series of short interviews of all artist and other collaborators of the **Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)**.

**Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)** is a project that consists of musicians, whose mission is to reveal the sounds of the Afro folkloric and contemporary styles of Latin music to the world with the immersion of technology. This project has reinvented how artists will compose, produce and perform this genre of music by

incorporating various applications of technology. This project is innovative in two main ways. First with production, by using Ableton Live as one of the digital audio workstation for this project, I have discovered new ways of how producing music in both the Afro folkloric, and or the contemporary style of Latin music can be created quickly, effectively, and easily with just the use of sampling and working on your laptop. This not only allowed me to produce music that sonically best represents the various Afro folkloric styles of Latin music, but it also allowed me to see of how producing in Ableton Live in the future will help artist reduce dramatically the production cost for future projects. Secondly, Ableton Live can be a great application for not only producing music but to incorporate visual content, and provide viewers with a thrilling live performance. This will allow musicians, visual artist, and dancers to work together to create an interactive, and exciting live performance that will provide a new platform that will reveal the Afro folkloric and contemporary styles of Latin music to the world. The *Gerami Groover Presents* apps will become an archive for all future projects, this app will serve as a library of all *Gerami Groover presents* projects, music, history, videos, and much more. This project will create new avenues and possibilities of how the Afro folkloric and contemporary styles of Latin music can be produced, performed, and preserved in the year 2013 and beyond.

Throughout the entire production of **Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)**, I truly have witnessed my growth as a producer, engineer, composer, and artist. As a producer, I was introduced to Ableton Live through this project, and explored areas of sampling and sound design that were both topics that I had never experienced before. The academic year of 2013-2014 was the first time in my music education career that I had studied audio engineering. This project has allowed me gain confidence in what I can do, and become

more secure in my approach as an engineer. As a composer, I have explored a new approach as to how I can use Ableton Live as a new tool for my compositions, instead of composing with pen and paper first. All of these new skills that I have gained, allowed me to become more confident as an artist. I am excited about being able to incorporate more use of technology in my performances, and witness how my art will continue to grow into something innovative and inspiring.

One challenge that I had faced during the production of **Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)** was time management. Throughout the year I found it difficult at times to find a time that worked for all the artists involved with **Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)** to come together and record. I feel that this affected the quality of the arrangements. This was challenging because it did not allot me time to provide information to the musicians about the history and cultural context of the various styles of Afro folkloric and contemporary styles of music that we were recording. In the future, I would make sure that I find other ways to effectively incorporate the history of the styles of music before the artist begin recording. This will allow all of us to have a better interpretation of the music, which will allow the music to be recorded and performed in its correct context.

In the future there will be a series of multiple productions of *Gerami Groover Presents* globally, with each project specifically producing Afro folkloric and/or contemporary styles of Latin music within that particular region. The *Gerami Groover Presents* app will be released in the beginning of 2016. This app will serve a promotional device for the **Gerami Groover Presents: Spain, which** will begin productions in the year of 2016.



In conclusion, my hope is that the **Gerami Groover Presents: Revelación Latina (Berklee Edition)** will be a source of inspiration to all who participated in the creation of this project. My hope is that they will have a desire to want to share their knowledge of any Afro folkloric or contemporary styles of Latin music to others in their communities and beyond. I look forward to what the future holds for *Gerami Groover Presents*. I believe that this project will not only continue to reveal the Afro folkloric and contemporary styles of Latin music to the world with the immersion of technology but that the project will provide an opportunity for artists to collaborate and create a sense of community around the world.

### Citation

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