



BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC VALENICA CAMPUS

**“THE NATURE OF A CONTEMPORARY
PERCUSSIONIST”**

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Abstract

My goal for this year at Berklee Valencia as a percussionist, was to collaborate with musicians from around the world. I wanted to perform, record and research many different styles thus increasing my awareness of music and culture, as well as be able to cultivate a tangible body of work for my portfolio. I plan to achieve this through a series of collaborations with my fellow students. It is my goal to utilize a series of different percussion rigs for each recording session in order to capture the essence of what I feel that music calls for. Through researching various different musical styles such as Flamenco, Samba, South Indian Carnatic and Iranian music. I will attempt to capture the fundamental essence that make up these particular styles of music, whilst integrating my own creative and modern approach. Through this project I intend to further develop my skills as an accompanist, build a portfolio, and develop strong relationships with my colleagues.

Keywords: Percussion, Collaboration, Flamenco, Samba, Carnatic, Iranian, percussionist, accompanist

1. Introduction

As a hand percussionist and drum-set player I've always been drawn to many different kinds of music from around the world. When learning a new music, I tend to ask myself, what are the key rhythmic and instrumental elements that are the backbone of that music? Each style and culture have their own rhythms, and traditional instrumentation. In folk music around the world, the particular instrumentation of each ensemble has a unique texture that is specific to that kind of music. I have a deep respect for traditional music and have spent much time learning different musical traditions. But, sometimes not being from one of these cultures can leave me feeling a bit puzzled on how my musical voice can best be heard. This gives me the desire to be creative and craft my own sound. Over the past few years I have developed an arsenal of percussion instruments from around the world and have been trying to find ways to incorporate these instruments in modern musical situations that transcend a typical stylistic approach. I have developed an acoustic percussion rig that is a textural playground. Texture being one of the guiding forces, I try to create unique sonic landscapes that complement and enhance the music I am playing. Wood, Skin, Metal and Clay are some the colors I like to incorporate, and combining these sounds together can lead to a sonically delicious experience.

2. Proposed Culminating Experience

My initial CE idea was to create a percussion rig incorporating electronics and have the ability to perform a solo act. This was a fun and informative process in the beginning, but I

wasn't truly in love with this idea as I began to explore it more and it began to feel as though I was swimming upstream and began to ponder how I could morph my CE into something that felt more authentic to me.

The title "Culminating Experience" in of itself gave me the inspiration to craft the new path of my project. I asked myself, "What has been the bulk of my experience here at Berklee?" The answer was, all the collaborating and recording I've done with all the wonderful musicians from around the globe. I found myself playing and recording an incredible amount with all my peers. Not only was I just recording, but I was contributing a lot of creative input into their compositions and I truly enjoyed this process. I was beginning to build a body of work that I was very proud of, featuring a vast array of different musical styles. I attempted to enhance their music with my approach whilst retaining the fundamental elements that make their music what it is!

My goal was to collaborate as much as possible and create a portfolio of recorded work that features my percussive approach. Throughout the course of the school year I completed over 50 recording and overdub sessions. This project inherently became a recording/research and ethnomusicological project. When playing so many different styles, it requires a lot of research and study. For the sake of this thesis, I chose to showcase 4 different recordings of different musical styles and analyze my approach for each of them. I had to dig deep in my musical library and utilize all that I've learned up until this point in order to accompany my colleague's music properly and do it stylistic justice, whilst bringing a fresh and unique approach with my own voice.

3. Objective and Sub Objectives

The main objective of this project was to collaborate and record with my colleagues and in turn create a harmonious musical relationship as well as a body of recorded work.

1. Find common ground between musicians
2. Complete recording sessions
3. Research different musical styles in order to accompany their music properly.
4. Create a sonic pallet with multiple percussion instruments via overdubs
5. Incorporate my musical voice into other people's compositions but also retain elements of that musical tradition to create a fresh approach.
6. Culminate a body of recorded work that I can incorporate into my portfolio that showcases my versatility as a drummer and percussionist.

3.1 Stylistic vs. Impressionistic

When dealing with traditional music, there is a fine line between playing something stylistically correct, and doing it justice or playing your impression of that music. I think it's very important to know when to do either. I tend to walk that line and I'm constantly asking myself when are either approaches appropriate and necessary. It is my belief that one needs to study a particular music in depth in order to understand the fundamental elements of what make it "swing" in order to then deconstruct it and play your impression of that music.

Being from the United States, I have been exposed to our incredibly rich musical history, and I truly love the music of my home country. Jazz, Funk, R&B and all that is in between are by no means excluded from my musical influence. But the United States hasn't retained a

strong history of hand percussion culture like many places around the world. Such as Africa, South America, The Caribbean, The Middle East and India. I am extremely drawn to the communal aspect of these musical cultures and the diasporic evolution of music from around the world. But being an “outsider” can sometimes feel daunting. My justification for playing other cultures music is that it is ok if I do my research and respect the music and approach it with a positive spirit. In my experience musicians from other cultures are very happy when other people love to play their music and approach it with open arms and a respectful attitude.

When in a new musical situation, many times it depends on what the composer is looking for. If one is recording Brazilian music, and the composer wants a traditional Samba it wouldn't necessarily be appropriate to stray too far from that style. But often times people ask me to play because they aren't looking for a stylistic approach rather something different.

In this day and age, the world is evolving due to globalization and music is no exception. Musical styles are rapidly becoming fused with one another and it is my belief that the best contemporary musicians can adapt and incorporate many approaches into their playing thus creating something that is a true reflection of comradery and harmony. Throughout history cultures have clashed and butt heads due to politics, race and other socio-political issues. In times of social turmoil, I turn to musicians, and artists. Because in that world, it is our job to harmonize with one another and create something greater than us.

The 4 works I am presenting will be a variety of traditional and non-traditional approaches. I intend to deconstruct my process and explain why I made the choices I did. They are a reflection of fellowship and collaboration that transcends borders.

4. Methodology

I have chosen 4 different recorded selections of varied styles to explain my methodology. For each of these songs I used different instruments in order to capture the vision of the composer as well as express my musical voice. In order to convey my approach properly I'd like to begin by introducing the compositions. Firstly, giving a brief overview of the traditional style, and traditional instrumentation and then my approach to said style.

Song	Composer	Style
#1 Timeless	Apoorva Krishna	South Indian Fusion
#2 Alla	Marta Bautista Serrano	Brazilian
#3 A Dancer With Closed Eyes	Hami Keivan	Iranian Jazz Fusion
#4 Las Palabras Ocultas	Eve Matin	Flamenco Inspired

4.1 South Indian Carnatic Music: A Brief Overview

South Indian classical music, or Carnatic music is a musical artform that is over 2,000 years old. A typical Carnatic Ensemble would consist of violin, a vocalist, kanjira (a small frame drum with a lizard skin played with one hand. See *Figure 2*), and the mridangam (a double-sided drum which is the predecessor to the tabla. See *figure 1*) Other elements can include the ghatam (see *Figure 3*), the morsing, mandolin or guitar. The ensemble is accompanied by a drone, or tonic to South Indian classical music, or Carnatic music is a musical artform that is over 2,000 years old. A typical Carnatic Ensemble would consist of violin, a vocalist, kanjira (a small frame drum with a lizard skin played with one hand. See

Figure 2), and the mridangam (a double-sided drum which is the predecessor to the tabla. See *figure 1*) Other elements can include the ghatam (see *Figure 3*), the morsing, mandolin or guitar. The ensemble is accompanied by a drone, or tonic to set the harmonic base of the song. Every Carnatic composition is based on a Raga and a Tala. A raga in Carnatic music provides a set of harmonic rules when forming a melody. Very similar to a mode, in Western music. Basically, the raga is the melodic scale in which the ensemble will be improvising in. A tala, is the rhythmic system in which the song is built upon. Every song has a tala, which refers the how many beats per cycle the composition is. In western terms, you can think of this like a time signature. In western music, harmony indicates the passing of time over a song form. But in Carnatic music, the tala is really what marks where a musician is in the form and everything is played relative to the tala, always cadencing to the top of the form. Tala cycle is typically measured by a Carnatic singer using their hands through a series of claps and waves. There are many different tala cycles. 3 beat, 7 beat, 24 beat – even 108 beat cycles! The mathematical framework in which Carnatic music is built upon, is truly astonishing. This rhythmic system uses far more advanced mathematical sequences than what the Western ear is accustomed to. Groupings of 5, 7, and 9 are very common, and they are played in all subdivisions as well.

To my knowledge there is no system that trains its musicians to deal with rhythm as successfully as the system that exists in South India.

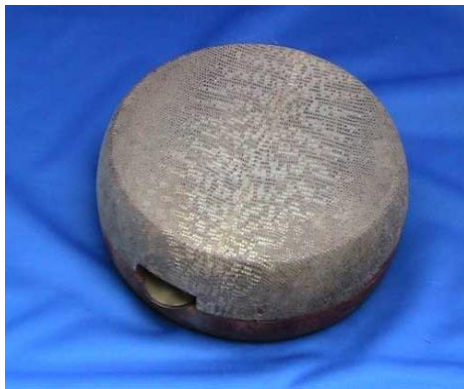
Figure 1:



1

Mridangam: A double sided drum, commonly found in Carnatic ensembles. This drum is played with both hands whilst sitting on the floor. Similar to tabla, it is used to accompany vocalists, leading the rhythmic cadence and phrasing of the composition. It requires years of intense study with a formal guru, and involves an immense amount of virtuosity and technique to play well.

Figure 2:



2

¹ Design, Maraid. "South Asian Arts." Mridangam - Glossary - South Asian Arts UK. Accessed June 10, 2019. http://www.saa-uk.org/resources_glossary/Mridangam.

² "Kanjira, Indian Lizard Skin Tambourine." Kanjira, Indian Lizard Skin Tambourine. Accessed July 16, 2019. https://chandrakantha.com/articles/indian_music/kanjira.html.

Kanjira: A small frame drum played with one hand. This small, but powerful drum can work in tandem with a mridangam player. The unique characteristic of this drum is that, one can apply pressure to the skin side of the drum thus creating a pitch bend otherwise known as a “*Gumiki*”. This technique changes the tonal aspect of the instrument, and is very characteristic of Carnatic music. Well trained Kanjira players can carry an ensemble and play extremely fast subdivisions, with just one hand utilizing a technique known as split finger technique.

Figure 3:

3



Ghatam Clay Pot: A clay pot that is held in the lap of the performer, the Ghatam is one of the more ancient instruments in a Carnatic ensemble. The instrumentalist uses their fingers, palms, and heels of the hands to strike different surfaces of the drum thus generating different tones.

³ "Ghatam Musical Instrument." Indiamart.com. Accessed July 16, 2019.
<https://www.indiamart.com/proddetail/ghatam-musical-instrument-19083100755.html>.

4.2 My Carnatic Approach: “Timeless” Composed by Apoorva Krishna

Early on in the first semester, South Indian violinist Apoorva Krishna approached me with a new composition of hers entitled *Timeless*. Because she had no experience with western notation, her process was purely aural. Her composition consisted of a melodic theme, a rhythmic “vamp”, 6 rhythmic variations and a final korvai. (A korvai is a typical phrase built upon a mathematical sequence that generally concludes of piece of Carnatic music). Conceptually the music was very South Indian, but due to the fact that her intention wasn’t to make a piece of classical music and we were collaborating with different musicians, it became something of its own. The tala, or time signature of the piece is in $\frac{3}{4}$ and is based on the raga Vagadishwari.

Because of my brief experience with Carnatic music, I was able to have an understanding of how she constructed her piece rhythmically. Knowing that we were going to need to communicate this music to other players, I sat with her and transcribed her phrases and put them into western rhythmic notation. The main melodic motif of this composition is a two-bar phrase that repeats throughout the song. In typical Carnatic fashion, I decided to accompany this phrase by playing in rhythmic unison. (See below *figure 4*).

Figure 4: Timeless Melodic Theme



This phrase was followed by a vamp section with three groups of 7, and one group of 3. It is a two-bar phrase with 24 beats total that after two cycles of $\frac{3}{4}$ cadence to beat one. (see below *figure 5*).

Figure 5: Timeless Vamp Section



Unlike a more western song form, *Timeless* does not have a standard melody or head. But Apoorva wrote 6 rhythmic and melodic variations that can be thought of as the “melody” or “head” of the piece. These variations are very syncopated and all played in relation to the tala. (see below *figure 6*).

Figure 6: Timeless Variations

The musical score consists of five staves of music, each starting with a measure number and a key signature. The chords and rhythmic patterns are as follows:

- Staff 1 (Measures 13-16): Chords C, C7, C, Bb, F7/A. Rhythmic patterns include eighth and sixteenth notes with rests.
- Staff 2 (Measures 17-20): Chords C, EDim9, C, Bb, F7/A. Rhythmic patterns include eighth and sixteenth notes with rests.
- Staff 3 (Measures 21-24): Chords Eb11, C, Bb, F7/A. Rhythmic patterns include eighth and sixteenth notes with rests.
- Staff 4 (Measures 25-28): Chords C, C7, C, Bb, F7/A. Rhythmic patterns include eighth and sixteenth notes with rests.
- Staff 5 (Measures 29-32): Chords F7, C7, C713, C, Bb, F7/A. Rhythmic patterns include eighth and sixteenth notes with rests.

When conceptualizing an approach to accompany these variations, I drew influence from a traditional Carnatic approach. I decided to play these figures in rhythmic unison, and fill in the space when needed. Because we weren't playing traditional music, my instrumentation wasn't purely traditional either. But I still wanted to retain Carnatic textural elements to evoke that sound. For the basic recording session, I had a percussion rig that consisted of cajon, frame drum, djembe, cymbals, bells and miscellaneous effects. For the crux of the song I played the variations with big brooms on the surface of the djembe. My intention in doing this was to create a solid but simple rhythmic and textural foundation that I later could overdub upon. In post-production we had an overdub session where I incorporated two more percussion instruments that would evoke a more Carnatic sound. The two instruments I overdubbed were:

Hadjira: A versatile multi frame drum that can be used to simulate a kanjira.

Hadjini: A double sided clay drum, that evokes the same tone as the traditional Ghatam.

4.3 Samba: A Brief Overview

For the purpose of this song, I will focus on the traditional instrumentation of the Brazilian Batucada. Annually in Brazil there is a festival called “Carnival” where thousands of people gather in Rio De Janeiro to observe this grand spectacle. Elaborate floats, costumes and dancers adorned with feathers and beads march through the streets dancing, singing and showcasing their team. Accompanying the festivities are drum ensembles featuring hundreds of local drummers in each ensemble. These drum groups are known as a “Batucada”. They parade through the streets playing an infectious groove called Samba. A syncopated dance rhythm typically notated in 2/4, samba evokes fun, party, and celebration. Its roots are of African origin, and it has a very particular feel or “swing”. The samba rhythm is based on a sixteenth note subdivision. But these 16th notes aren’t played “straight” but rather they have a unique lilt to them which gives Brazilian music one of its most important qualities. When hundreds of percussionists get together during carnival this swing fills the city and one can’t help but have a good time. Different syncopated rhythms are typically played on different instruments by players at the same time, thus, creating a groove. In a typical Batucada you will find, Surdo, Tamborim, Repinique, Caixa, Chocalo (large metal shaker), and Agogo Bells (metal bells with 2 different pitches).

(See below: *figures 7-9*) These are some of the key instruments that make up these ensembles.

Figure 7:

Surdo: A large bass drum worn around the waist struck with a large mallet. These drums have three different sizes and are referred to as Surdo 1, 2 and 3. The role of the surdo is to play strong down beats and provide a consistent and even quarter note pulse. When thinking in a 2/4 time signature, Surdo 1 would play an open tone on beat one, while surdo 2 would play a lower open tone on beat 2. Thus creating a constant High-Low quarter note pulse. Surdo 3 typically would play syncopated 16th notes in between 1 and 2.

**Figure 8:**

5



Tamborim: The tamborim is a small frame drum, approx 5 inches in diameter. In the batucada it is struck with a three-prong plastic beater. The tamborim will typically play syncopated rhythmic motifs throughout the batucada. The tamborim is also used to generate the swing of the samba using a unique technique specific to brazil where the players strike the drum 4 times, but on the third stroke they quickly flip the drum upside down to achieve an

⁴ "Contemporanea 20"x 60cm Surdo Wood." Musikhaus Thomann. Accessed July 16, 2019. https://www.thomann.de/es/contemporanea_20x_60cm_surdo_holz.htm.

⁵ "Torelli Tamborim Corpo Preto Pele Leitosa TT404 Baqueta." O Acústico. Accessed July 16, 2019. <https://loja.oacustico.com.br/Torelli-Tamborim-Corpo-Injetado-Preto-Pele-Leitosa-TT404PR>.

“upstroke”. When done in rhythmic succession at a fast pace, the result is an extremely groovy Samba swing.

Figure 9:

6

Repinique: The repinique, is similar to the timbales found in Cuban music but slightly different.

Typically worn around the waist for marching it is a high-pitched drum with a synthetic plastic drum head and a metal shell. Approx 12 inches deep, the repinique in Samba, is played with a small wooden drum stick in one hand, and a bare hand. The leader of the batucada



typically plays this drum as it's sound can cut through the volume of the ensemble. Typically, the leader of the batucada will play rhythmic calls that signal to band what to do next. This elicits the “call and response effect” between the leader and the band. But the repinique is also played by multiple musicians at the same time to provide a swinging feel for the groove.

4.3 My Samba approach: “Alla” Composed by Marta Bautista Serrano

Initially bassist Marta Bautista had a melody and form, but was unclear as to what style she wanted it to be. She thought maybe it would could work as a samba. For the recording session I first played drum set and tried to lay down a solid and simple foundation, knowing that later I would do percussion overdubs. A few weeks after the initial recording session with

⁶ "Repinique 12" X 30 Cm - Aluminium, 8 Rods, Izzo - Samba, Brazil." Djoliba Music Store. Accessed July 16, 2019. <https://djoliba.com/en/instruments/996-repinique-12-x-30-cm-8-rods-izzo.html>.

the band I overdubbed percussion. For the verse and chorus, I overdubbed shaker and pandeiro (a typical Brazilian tambourine). But for the final chorus of the song I recorded a full batucada.

I recorded 4 repiniques, 4 tamborims, 4 caixas, and two surdos. Because of my previous experience playing this kind of music. (see *figures 10-12* below)

Figure 10: A notated example of the repinique rhythm I played in loop.



Figure 11: A notated example of the tamborim pattern I played throughout the song.



Figure 12: A notated example of the main surdo pattern played during the batucada section.



I knew exactly what sound I wanted to achieve and how we should go about recording everything. We only had two hours to record this, so efficiency was key. I referred to a song entitled “Fanfarra” by Brazilian composer, Sergio Mendes.⁷ It is a classic and traditional

⁷ Sergio Mendes, “Fanfarra,” track 1 on *Brasileiro*, Craft recordings, 1992.

reference for anyone trying to capture an authentic batucada sound. Unlike the first song “*Timeless*”, I wanted to try to recreate the sound as traditional as possible. I didn’t feel it was appropriate to stray too far from the style or try to play an impression of my approach.

4.4 Middle Eastern Percussion- A Brief Overview

Middle eastern music spans a vast region and has many different styles and comes from many different countries. There is a rich hand percussion tradition in middle eastern music. To go into an in-depth explanation of the vast instrumentation included in this musical culture, could be its own research paper. For the sake of this I will focus on a few textures and explain my inspiration for why I chose what I did.

Some common drums that can be found include the Darbuka, Riq, Daf, and other various types of frame drums. But the most common percussion ensemble consists of the Tombak and the Daf (see *figure 13-14* below).

Figure 13:

8



Daf: A large frame drum used in classical and modern ensembles. It is made of wood with many metal ringlets inside that rub against the drum creating a sharp sound in tandem with the sound of the hands striking the drum.

Figure 14:

9



Tombak: A Persian goblet drum that is considered one of the most common instruments in Persian music. The body is wooden and typically the head consists of sheepskin or goatskin.

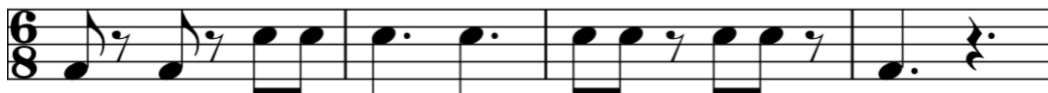
⁸ "Professional Persian DAF ERBANE Def Drum by Afshari Ad-304 for Sale Online." eBay. Accessed July 16, 2019. <https://www.ebay.com/p/Professional-Persian-DAF-ERBANE-Def-Drum-by-Afshari-Ad-304/15023896946>.

⁹ "Persian Quality Shirani Tonbak Tombak Zarb Drum with Soft Case." Amazon. Accessed July 16, 2019. <https://www.amazon.com/Persian-Quality-Shirani-Tonbak-Tombak/dp/B00UOZW13A>.

4.5 My Approach: “A Dancer With Closed Eyes” Composed by Hami Keivan

Hami Keivan, who is an Iranian born composer and pianist drew inspiration from his home country. Incorporating melodic aspects of his home country. His composition “A Dancer with Closed Eyes” was not traditionally Persian it allowed me more room to play my stylistic version of the music. Hami drew upon influences of jazz and modern contemporary music. So, I decided to do the same. In my arsenal of percussion, I didn’t have any traditional instruments from this region, but I did have a small frame drum called the “Ocean Drum” that resembled the sound of a Daf. It is a small frame drum filled with silver buckshot, that when struck has a semi harsh sound. If anything in my personal collection could resemble the sound of the Daf it would be this instrument. I drew inspiration from a song entitled “Travel Notes” by Israeli pianist Alon Yavnai,¹⁰ whom blends rhythm, harmony and texture from around the world. I also recorded with brooms on the surface of a djembe. This evokes sounds of the region, but again is non-traditional. In this instance, I felt as though I had creative license to stray away from the tradition. I also believe Hami was looking for someone who could connect the dots in this fashion. This piece drew from Iranian harmony, but it allowed for more of an impressionistic jazz approach. The crux of the song was triplet based and the formal groove I played on the djembe was as such. (see *Figure 15* below).

Figure 15:



¹⁰ Alon Yavnai, “Travel Notes,” Track 5 on *Travel Notes*, Obliq Sound, 2008

4.6 Flamenco- A Brief Overview

Flamenco is a traditional music from Spain. It has many influences, from Arabic, Indian, Romanian and African culture. The ensembles typically consist of a singer, a few dancers whom also may play palmas which are claps, a guitar player and a cajon player. The cajon, is a wooden box which is sat on and played with the hands. Inside the cajon are guitar strings which create a rattle sound, almost emulating a snare. But the cajon is a relatively new instrument in flamenco music. It was introduced in the 1960's after it was discovered in Peru. Originally the only percussion in a flamenco was the sound of the dancers feet, and claps. (see *Figure 16* below)

Figure 16:

11



Cajon: A wooden box used in modern flamenco ensembles. Played with the palms, fingers and knuckles. Rhythms normally played by the dancers were adapted for the Cajon.

¹¹ "LA ROSA NATURE CAJÓN FLAMENCO." Musicopolix. Accessed July 16, 2019. <https://musicopolix.com/cat/baterias-y-percusion/cajones/71029-la-rosa-nature-cajon-flamenco.html>.

There are numerous Flamenco rhythms, but for the sake of this research I have decided to focus on a rhythm called Solea. Solea is a 12-beat cyclical rhythm played at a slow tempo. (see *Figure 17* below).

Figure 17:

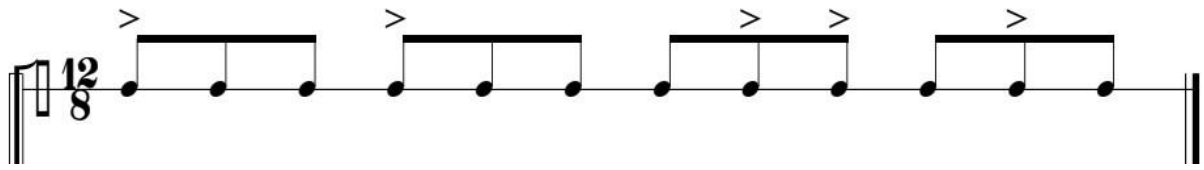


All the notes on the staff above are typically accented by the bass tone of the cajon, the stomp of the dancer as well as accompanied by the sound the claps or palmas. This textural element was extremely important for me to try to emulate. The lyrical content, slow tempo and cyclical nature is very rich and emotive making it one of the deepest in the flamenco tradition.

4.7 My Flamenco Approach: “Las Palabras Ocultas” Composed by Eve Matin

When recording the percussion part for harpist Eve Matin’s Solea, I tried to emulate this ensemble. The slow pace of this composition and richness of the harmony gave it certain characteristics of solea, but again it was a non-traditional piece of music. Nonetheless I wanted to retain as much integrity to the tradition as I could. During the recording session I overdubbed 4 layers of claps, and as ensemble we recorded along with clap loops. The Pattern I recorded was based off of a traditional Solea rhythm (see *Figure 18* below).

Figure 18:



Once the claps were layered, I primarily played cajon with the basic solea pattern. All the interlocking parts were as such (see **Figure 19** below)

Figure 19:

Musical notation for Figure 19. It consists of four staves, each in 12/8 time. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 60. The staves are labeled Clap 1, Clap 2, Clap 3, and Cajón. Clap 1 and Clap 2 have the same notation as Figure 18. Clap 3 has a different pattern with rests. The Cajón staff has a pattern of eighth notes and rests, with accents (>) over the notes. Below the Cajón staff is a rhythmic pattern: d i d i d i d i d i d i d i d i.

Rhythmically the song had many cadence points to the 11th eighth note which is characteristic of flamenco cadences, or remates. The final section of the song, featured a rhythm called Alegrias which is the same rhythmic cell, but at a slightly brighter tempo.

4.8 Resources & Materials Needed

Material Resources

- Ocean drum, Pandeiro, Djembe, Misc. Percussion, Batucada instruments, Cajon, Hadjira, Hadjini.
- School recording studio facilities equipment
- Pro tools recording software
- Scores and lead sheets
- Reference tracks

Human Resources

- Sergio Martinez
- Eve Matin
- Hami Keivan
- Marta Bautista
- Apoorva Krishna
- Marcelo Wilson
- Conor Schon
- Jamey Haddad

5. Justification

My intention with this project was to learn more about music and culture as well as to build my portfolio. There are many musicians in the industry but I feel that versatility is extremely important. My goal was to expand my versatility whilst retaining my musical voice. Many percussionists are proficient in a few styles but I feel in this day and age it is necessary to be extremely well versed in many styles, and this project allowed me to explore that possibility. My creative use of instrumentation and unique textural elements give aspiring percussionists an insight on how to approach new recording sessions. I also intend to develop of teaching method in order to help musicians begin to approach and decode new music.

6. Professional Plan

In many instances after being offered a gig, or teaching opportunity I have been asked to submit examples of my work. Nothing in the past had displayed my versatility like the portfolio I've accumulated here at Berklee. I know have something tangible I can email to clients or prospective musicians that clearly demonstrates my abilities. Going through this process has also caused to me being thinking about a professional teaching method that helps me break down music in a palatable way for others to understand. I intend to further develop this mindset and cultivate a solid method I can deliver to private students, and universities.

7. Conclusion

In my estimation I feel that the works I have presented were very much a success. Although there is always room for improvement. "Timeless" was technically very challenging to execute, but nonetheless, a joy. By no means does my skill level compare to that of a professionally trained Carnatic musician, so attempting to emulate this style was a challenge. "Alla", was less of a challenge due to my experience with Samba. The real challenge was overdubbing so many instruments accurately and musically in a short amount of time. But I feel the final batucada section of the song is an accurate representation of Samba. "A Dancer with Closed Eyes" could have gone in many directions and the open-ended nature of it allowed for more of an impressionistic approach. The real challenge aside from executing the music correctly was deciding was textures and what rhythms work for each section. But overall, I feel that the

mood of the piece is complimented well by the percussion. If I another opportunity to record this piece, I would choose a rhythm the accompany the melody that didn't have such a strong downbeat on one. Thus, giving it a less heavy feel. Finally "Las Palabras Ocultas" was not much of a challenge to record, but rather to get the feel exactly right. I still don't feel that I quite nailed it. There's a fine balance between the relationship of the claps and the cajon. For this piece I also would have liked to overdub a few more drums to give the rhythm section some more energy.

In these times, there is a lot of love and acceptance in the world, but there is also a lot of fear and hate. Many times, when people don't understand others cultures they can develop a fear from this mystery. This fear can turn into hate and exaggerate the feeling of the "other". This kind of mentality is extremely dangerous for society. As a musician operating on a global level, I keep an open mind to all cultures, not only musically but socially. When observing my work and collaborations, hopefully in some small or large way it can help perpetuate the idea of love, openness, and embracing people that are different from you. It has allowed me to realize how similar we all are truly are.

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