

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE TONADAS TRINITARIAS
OF TRINIDAD DE CUBA

By

JOHNNY FRIAS

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MUSIC

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2010

© 2010 Johnny Frías

To my great grandmother Flor Marina López, who introduced me to Cuban culture.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my parents and family, my good friend Pepe Clavijo, and my professors Larry Crook and Welson Tremura for their guidance and support. I would also like to thank Enrique Zayas Bringas whose help made my research in Trinidad possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	4
LIST OF TABLES.....	7
LIST OF FIGURES.....	8
ABSTRACT	9
CHAPTER	
1 PRELUDE TO THE TONADAS TRINITARIAS: THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES.....	11
A Theoretical Framework.....	11
The Colonial History of Trinidad de Cuba	14
Instruments of the Tonadas Trinitarias	23
2 ORIGINS THE TONADA TRINITARIA.....	30
Links to Saint's Day Processions.....	30
Patricio Gascón and Tando Villa.....	34
Rebel Activities and the Wars of Independence	36
The Valle de los Ingenios and the Cabildo de Congos Reales	39
Trinidad's Musical Environment.....	42
The Coros de Clave.....	44
Tonada Themes and Performance Contexts	48
3 THE MUSICAL SIDE	55
Fernando Ortiz and Afro-Cuban Music	55
African-Derived Elements in the Tonadas.....	56
Rhythmic Characteristics	58
Vocal Characteristics	64
Folkloricization.....	72
4 EVOLUTION OF THE TONADAS TRINITARIAS	74
Arnaldo Fonseca: An Elder Tonadero.....	74
Race and the Tonadas in Trinidad	74
Arnaldo's Account	76
Joseíto's Account.....	85
The Three Eras.....	88
The First Era.....	91
The Second Era	95

The Third Era	98
Contemporary Performance: Conjunto Folklórico de Trinidad.....	115
The Impact of Tourism	122
5 CONCLUSION.....	126
GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....	131
LIST OF REFERENCES	133
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	136

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>		<u>page</u>
3-1	Comparison of instrumental and vocal parts in Afro-Cuban musics.	57
3-2	Comparison of the structure of inspiraciones in Cuban musics.	66

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>page</u>
1-1 Location of Trinidad de Cuba.	15
1-2 The Valle de los Ingenios (Valley of the Sugar Mills).	21
1-3 The instruments of the tonadas trinitarias..	26
3-1 6/8 bell pattern.	59
3-2 Bell pattern in 2/4 time.	59
3-3 Güiro pattern as played by Gregorio	60
3-4 Güiro pattern as played by members of the Conjunto Folklórico.....	60
3-5 Bombo pattern as played by Claro	61
3-6 Bombo pattern as played by Bernardo.....	62
3-7 Bombo pattern as played by Nelson.	62
3-8 Un solo golpe pattern.	63
4-1 Arnaldo Fonseca and Pedro Carpio Quezada	78
4-2 Group of tonaderos in “traditional” style dress.	104
4-3 Timeline of the evolution of the tonadas trinitarias.	91

Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Music

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE TONADAS TRINITARIAS
OF TRINIDAD DE CUBA

By

Johnny Frías

May 2010

Chair: Larry Crook
Major: Music

The *tonada trinitaria* is an Afro-Cuban musical manifestation native to the town of Trinidad de Cuba. The city became one of the Caribbean's foremost sugar exporters in the early nineteenth century, for which reason thousands of African slaves were brought to work in the neighboring Valle de los Ingenios (Valley of the Sugar Mills). It was here that the local musical practices of African slaves, their descendents, and white peasants meshed, producing an environment conducive to the creation of creole musical forms, of which the *tonada trinitaria* is a prime example.

The tradition took shape among the black urban population of Trinidad following the collapse of the city's sugar-based economy in the late 1840s. The first *tonada* groups appeared during the first war of Cuban independence (1868-1878), propagated by Patricio Gascón and Tando Villa, both of whom were musicians of the Cabildo de San Antonio de Congos Reales. This *cabildo* was a cultural and religious center of Bantu-derived traditions, serving as a theater for local black cultural production. Both men were also war volunteers in the Cuban army and *zafreiros* (cane-cutters during harvest season). Their personal backgrounds and interactions in the war and in the

sugar fields of the Valle de los Ingenios allowed them to combine the Spanish and African musical influences which formed the base of the tonadas trinitarias.

The *tonada* groups consist of a chorus, a lead singer, three small drums, a *güiro* (gourd-scraper), and a hoe blade struck with an iron beater. The *guía*, or lead singer, begins by introducing the tonada (a two-to-four line text). The percussion joins in, providing a steady rhythmic accompaniment, followed by the chorus, who repeats the tonada. In call-and-response style, the *guía* improvises his text based on the theme of the tonada. These themes include love, social commentary, patriotism, and *puyas*, which poke fun at a certain person or situation. The tonada groups represented certain *barrios* (marginal neighborhoods) and performed during all-night transits through the city streets, stopping to give serenades at certain homes or meet with each other in competition.

The tradition evolved as new generations took over and elders retired. This generational turnover and change is conceptualized as three distinct eras by tonada musicians. Since the beginning of the third era in the 1960s, the tonadas have declined considerably in their activity, passing to the realm of preserved folklore. Following the rise in tourism in Cuba in the 1990s, the tonadas have become confined to folkloric performances for tourists.

CHAPTER 1
PRELUDE TO THE TONADAS TRINITARIAS: THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL
PERSPECTIVES

A Theoretical Framework

The *tonada trinitaria* is an Afro-Cuban musical manifestation native to the town of Trinidad de Cuba. It was here that the local musical practices of African slaves, their descendents, and white peasants meshed, producing an environment conducive to the creation of creole musical forms, of which the *tonada trinitaria* is a prime example. Thus the tonadas are a creole product specific to Trinidad. They also fall into the category designated by Cuban scholars as Afro-Cuban folklore. It is necessary to understand certain key concepts in order to frame the history and evolution of the *tonada trinitaria*. Perhaps all historical scholarly study of Cuban music must take into account the concepts of creolization and transculturation. In addition, it is important to clarify the label “Afro-Cuban” as well as the terms “folklore” and “folkloric” as they are used in Cuba.

Creolization, according to Peter Manuel, “connotes the development of a distinctive new culture out of the prolonged encounter of two or more other cultures” (1995, 14) This term is used to describe the new cultural practices in the Caribbean resulting from the mix of African, European, indigenous, and Asian influences during colonialism. In Cuba, the primary groups coming together were Spanish and West African in origin, themselves composed of a variety of ethnicities. In terms of Cuban music, creolization is behind the origin of virtually every style created on the island. Many of these musics were first cultivated among the lower (largely black) classes, whose traditions were denounced as inferior by Eurocentric elites. The tonadas trinitarias are an example of a creole musical tradition, drawing largely on the influence

of Bantu-derived musical practices and those of the primarily Spanish-descended Cuban peasants. It was not until the twentieth century that black cultural production in Cuba began gaining scholarly acceptance due primarily to the work of Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969), the Cuban scholar recognized as the first to study Cuba's African-derived cultural practices in depth.

In one of his most famous works, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* ([1940] 1978), Ortiz introduced the concept of transculturation as an alternative to acculturation. The latter implies an ethnocentric view: when culture changes, it moves in a unilateral direction towards Western development. Transculturation allows for more than one-way movement. It is the natural tendency for humans to resolve conflict over time, which translates into exchange and adaptation between two cultural groups. Ortiz explains that cultural loss, miscegenation, and creation all occur within transculturation. For all parties involved, cultural elements are both contributed and lost, creating a new cultural union. In Cuba, the broadest generalization we can make about the culture is to call it *mulato*, the offspring of Spanish and West African peoples in the context of colonialism and slavery. The *tonada trinitaria* is a product of transculturation resulting from the confluence of musical influences of Spanish and West African groups, specifically those which survived the harsh environment of slavery.

Ortiz, in his later works, was able to apply the idea of transculturation to the music of Cuba. In his works such as *La africanía de la música folklórica de Cuba* ([1950] 2001), he attempted to discern African and Iberian elements and trace their lineage to specific ethnic groups based on musical characteristics. The phenomenon of transculturation can be used to explain the majority – if not all – musical production on

the island. Ortiz's work on black cultural production in Cuba led to the use of the terms "Afro-Cuban" and specific uses for "folklore" and "folkloric."

The concepts of "folklore" and "Afro-Cuban folkloric music" were popularized by Ortiz. He used the term "Afro-Cuban" to designate African heritage in pre-revolutionary Cuba, when racism was deeply ingrained in society (Hagedorn 1995). Between 1924 and 1937, the study of popular traditional Cuban culture – referring to the cultural practices of the masses as opposed to elite culture – was established, with Ortiz at the forefront.

Ortiz's construction of the term "folklore" is derived from European notions of the folk, referring to the lower socio-economic stratum. In Cuba this signaled African heritage. Ortiz's emphasis on the study of black cultural production, termed "Afro-Cuban," in the context of "folklore" studies, resulted in the association of "Afro-Cuban" with "folklore" in Cuba. Thus these terms were fused inextricably by scholars and popularized along with the concept of "folkloric." "Folkloric" is not simply an adjective for folklore, but according to Katherine Hagedorn (1995), "it seems to denote a popular performative derivation of folklore." Thus while Afro-Cuban folklore refers to black cultural production characterized by oral transmission, variation, and improvised performance, folkloric production occurs when a *derivation* of this is performed (Hagedorn 1995). Essentially, this is folklore withdrawn from its original context – often in the form of staging by folkloric groups. It is thus transformed into a cultural commodity, as it is showcased for audience consumption. These concepts are present in the history and evolution of the tonadas trinitarias.

According to Joseíto Lares (2009), a tonada musician I interviewed in 2009, this

history and evolution is conceptualized into three eras. The first era begins with the origins of the tonada tradition around the time of the Ten Year's War (1868-1878). The second begins in the decade of the 1900s or 1910s as a younger generation takes over the direction of the tonada groups. The tradition flourishes until 1950 or 1951, after which it declines, entering a period of dormancy due to local economic and political crises. The early 1960s marks the beginning of the third era under the new Revolutionary government, whereupon the tonadas are revived in a new folkloricized setting. Let us now turn to the story of Trinidad de Cuba, out of whose unique history the tonadas emerged.

The Colonial History of Trinidad de Cuba

The *tonada trinitaria* is a musical tradition of Trinidad de Cuba, a town on Cuba's south-central coast. Dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, the genre contains notable African influences and can be described as predominantly Afro-Cuban.¹ The music is performed by an ambulatory chorus of singers who respond to a lead voice, accompanied by a small ensemble of drums and percussion. While its heritage owes much to the influence of Spanish and Cuban peasant music, its uniqueness in the realm of Cuban music stems from its locality. The history of the tonada trinitaria is inextricably tied to that of Trinidad. This chapter recounts the chronological history of Trinidad de Cuba in relation to this musical tradition. The city's early history laid the groundwork for its rise as a major sugar exporter of Cuba during the late eighteenth century, leading to a short "golden age." This was followed by economic crisis, isolation, and the rise of

¹ The label "Afro-Cuban" reflects Fernando Ortiz's popularization of this term in reference to black cultural production in Cuba. I will use the term in this same manner. I will use the term "black" to reference Cubans of predominant African heritage, as well as the African slaves brought to Cuba.

the tonada trinitaria. Scholars can agree as to the general area of origin, time frame, and the various cultural groups whose influence marked the tradition, yet the details are still contested. Presenting the early colonial history of Trinidad leading up to the tonada trinitaria and describing its various cultural influences, this chapter serves as a prelude to the origin of this unique tradition.



Figure 1-1. Location of Trinidad de Cuba.

Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar founded Trinidad de Cuba near the Arimao River, with the motive of extracting gold from the surrounding valley. The area was populated by a large indigenous community which was rapidly decimated as it was exploited for labor by the Europeans. Today, what remains of indigenous origin are many of the place names: the Guamuhaya (or Escambray) Mountains, the Arimao River, and the Guaurabo River. The Villa de la Santísima Trinidad was among the first eight *villas*, or permanent settlements in Cuba. While most historians of the area regard Trinidad as the third villa, José Castellanos argues it was fourth, citing the specific dates recorded by Velázquez in his chronicle of Cuba's settlement (Castellanos 1989).

The first musicians in Trinidad arrived with the Velázquez expedition: Juan Ortis, Alonso Morón, and Porrás. Porrás was a singer, Morón played the vihuela (a guitar-like stringed instrument originating in Spain), and Ortis was both a singer and master of the vihuela and viola. Ortis resided in Trinidad for four years, where he was a music

instructor (Zayas, June 11, 2009). These were the first colonial musicians in Cuba, and although they all would leave with Hernán Cortés to the conquest of Mexico, the Spanish musical footprint had been planted. Spanish hegemony would mean that subsequent musical creation in the island would be held in comparison with “civilized” European music. African-derived musics would be regarded as barbaric and unrefined throughout the colonial period and well into the twentieth century.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Trinidad gained significance as a Caribbean port. In fact, the Spanish founded five of Cuba’s first eight villas facing the Caribbean. This reflected their area of primary interest, and Caribbean port cities acted as points on a net of communication and trade. Trinidad was particularly important due to its location in the center of Cuba’s Caribbean coast, north of Jamaica. With the rise of contraband trade and corsairs, Trinidad became a center of importance, again due to its strategic geographic location. The fortification of Havana, the system of Spanish *flotas*, and the centralization and monopolization of the Spanish crown favoring Havana in the seventeenth century made Trinidad an alternative (contraband) trading point for the Dutch, British, and French (Venegas Delgado 2005; García 1972). Coastal towns in Cuba falling outside of the navigation circuit of the *flotas* were unfortified. They led a precarious existence, relying on contraband and inter-colonial commerce (Capablanca 1998). Isolation and a somewhat privileged access to contraband trade and this allowed for slow economic growth. In the latter part of the century, Trinidad began to employ local corsairs, who attacked foreign ships and other colonies, contributing to an accumulation of wealth in the town.

In addition to contraband trade, tobacco was important to Trinidad’s economy.

This was accompanied by subsistence farming and cattle ranching. The first tobacco farmers were largely from the Canary Islands. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, Spanish immigration policies brought fifty Canarian families each year to Cuba, who dedicated themselves primarily to agriculture. This formed the base of the Cuban peasantry (Esquenazi Pérez 2009). These *colonos* (small-scale farmers) owned the *vegas* of tobacco in the fertile countryside surrounding the town of Trinidad. During this time Trinidad had one of the smallest populations in Cuba (Capablanca 1998). Tobacco, contraband, and corsairs were to be the economic momentum leading into the changes of the late eighteenth century.

Trinidad developed an independent consciousness due to its isolation and contraband activities. An absence of colonial authority in the city spurred the local perception that Trinidad was free of Spanish dominance. Its involvement with foreigners in contraband trade forged a sense of inter-colonial ties and disobedience toward the Spanish crown (Capablanca 1998). In addition, Trinidad had a strong, local, creole character. These traits – rebelliousness, locality, and creoleness – continue to characterize the city into the present day, and contributed to the formation of unique cultural traditions such as the *tonada trinitaria*.

In the early eighteenth century, economic liberalization and the first sugar plantations created a major shift in the local economy. The change of dynasties in Spain resulted in economic reforms in which the crown's monopoly on trade was replaced with liberal policies promoting the interest of its colonies (Capablanca 1998). Spain began giving increased attention to Trinidad, recognizing the significance of its geographic location, which was on the border of its Caribbean dominion. Spain

reasserted its authority over Trinidad, resulting in the decline of contraband trade and piracy. Filling this gap were the first small sugar plantations. In 1737, seventeen existed, increasing to twenty-five by 1757. As Trinidad became “safer” with the decline of piracy and increasing economic advantages, its population increased. During this time Catholic traditions became more pronounced.

Since the earliest days of its existence, Trinidad had maintained a Catholic tradition. Bartolomé de las Casas held the first mass shortly after arriving in Trinidad with Velázquez in 1514. Yet it was not until the eighteenth century that Trinidad’s major churches were built. The arrival of the Frays of San Francisco during this time also strengthened popular devotion to Catholicism. The town’s religious sentiment was reflected in the establishment of the street names: Cristo, Rosario, Gloria, and Amargura, among others. The first Holy Week with processions dates back to 1534 in Trinidad, yet these seem to have gained importance in the seventeenth century (León 1983). The processions made their way through the streets of the town – whose names were connected to these – from church to church (Capablanca 1998).

Trinidad’s Holy Week processions became famous in Cuba and would serve as an antecedent to later secular reinterpretations, of which the tonada trinitaria is an example. The processions were dedicated to various saints and were each different in character. At least some, however, were accompanied by music in transit. García Alvarez cites the procession of the Viacrucis, which was “accompanied by the devotees, an orchestra, and a chorus which sang a verse of the miserere at each cross²” (1992, 14). León expands upon this fact:

² The processions stopped at crosses which were set up on the processional routes. Some were on buildings, while others were planted in the ground.

In colonial times, the Brotherhood of San Antonio, who were almost entirely free blacks and mulattoes, were in charge of heading the procession. That procession was sponsored by the congo³ Cabildo of Trinidad, under the tutelage and authorization of the clergy and merchants . . . The whole nocturnal transit is accompanied by the city band and choruses of the different brotherhoods.⁴ (1983, 24)

It is not clear if the musical accompaniment was always a part of Trinidad's Holy Week processions, but it seems to have been established firmly by the nineteenth century. As far as the cabildos in Trinidad, the primary cabildo – that is, linked to the Catholic Church in the town – was linked to the power and political structure of the Church. The Afro-Cuban cabildos emerged in the nineteenth century during the city's period of wealth and splendor. These were the products of the mass numbers of African slaves brought in to work in sugar production, some of whom were able to organize mutual aid societies in Trinidad which aided in African cultural preservation.

The late eighteenth century ushered in Trinidad's "golden age." Sugar production rose, the population increased sharply, and an unprecedented accumulation of wealth transformed the small town into an economic and political center of Cuba. A number of factors pushed Trinidad in this direction. In 1731, lieutenant governors were put in charge of the Cuban provinces. Trinidad became the seat of governance of the central province (Las Villas). Following the British occupation of Havana in 1762, the government of Carlos III carried out economic and political reforms aimed at defending its colonial holdings and promoting free trade between the metropolis and the colonies (Capablanca 1998). This worked in Trinidad's favor, as it further liberalized trade and stimulated the Spanish involvement in the slave trade. With the collapse of the world's

³ In Cuba, the slaves of the Bantu groups were called *congos* and their derivative culture described as *congo*. These labels are Spanish terms; thus they do not require capitalization.

⁴ All translations are by the author.

largest sugar producer - Saint Domingue - in 1791 with the Haitian Revolution, Cuba seized the opportunity and began its rise as a sugar giant. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Trinidad had become the third largest exporter of sugar in Cuba. Not only did Cuba gain from the collapse of Saint Domingue's sugar production, but from the huge exodus of capital which arrived at its door. Huge numbers of Saint Domingue planters transplanted their holdings – including slaves – to Cuba. They became especially significant to coffee production in the eastern province of Oriente. Trinidad, encompassed by fertile mountains and valleys to the north, also received a bulk of Saint Domingue's exiled planters and slaves, who established themselves in coffee cultivation. Sugar, however, was to be Trinidad's future.

Slaves and Their Musical Contributions

As Trinidad moved from tobacco and cattle ranching into a sugar-based economy, the manual labor requirements incited the influx of large numbers of African slaves. The first Spanish slave ship arrived in Casilda (a small town adjacent to Trinidad which served as its port) in 1698. Those first one hundred-and-fifty slaves were bought by those who would become the primary landowning families in Trinidad: the Borrells, Iznagas, and Echenaguzias. These surnames are still common in Trinidad among both whites and blacks, a testament to the level of miscegenation which occurred in Trinidad.

Trinidad's importation of African slaves paralleled that of the entire colony. According to census data, there were 44,393 slaves in Cuba in 1774. This had risen to almost 200,000 by 1817 and to 436,495 by 1841 (CIDMUC 1997, 24). Trinidad's economic growth corresponds closely: the city reached its zenith in 1841, exporting over 8,000 tons of sugar (García Alvarez 1992). It was the fifth largest city in Cuba, its

wealth rivaled only by Havana and Matanzas (Capablanca 1998). The Valle de los Ingenios (Valley of the Sugar Mills) – home to Trinidad’s agricultural production – contained 43 mills. The city’s demographics also changed radically as well; the black population had increased drastically during the sugar boom. In 1845, over half of the city’s 12,000 - 15,000 inhabitants were black or mulatto (Capablanca 1998). In addition, the neighboring Valle de los Ingenios was home to large numbers of slaves.

The Africans brought to Trinidad came primarily from the western portion of the continent of Africa, an area stretching from modern-day Senegal to Angola. The largest groups were classified in Cuba under the names *mandinga*, *gangá*, *mina*, *arará*, *lucumí*, *carabalí*, and *congo*. The last three were the most influential in Trinidad,



Figure 1-2. The Valle de los Ingenios (Valley of the Sugar Mills).

evident in the religion, music, and cabildos of the region. In Cuba, the congos (Bantu) were the largest group to be brought prior to the nineteenth century, being replaced with

increasing numbers of lucumíes (Yoruba). However, this pattern was somewhat concentrated in Havana and the western provinces; in central Cuba the congos maintained their large numbers. López Valdés (2002, 262) shows that congos comprised 67% of the slaves in Santa Clara, 50% in the Río de Ay (adjacent to Trinidad), and 71% in Sancti Spíritus. The congo slaves were not only a majority of the slave population, but given that they had been brought in large numbers since the early days of slavery, their descendents in the free colored population of Trinidad were most likely numerous.

The first Afro-Cuban cabildo in Trinidad was established in 1845 and was congo in affiliation. A group of free congos bought a house which would serve both as a center for ritual activities and for entertainment for the marginalized black community. As for any organization of the time, it needed to be established under the name of a Catholic patron saint. In this way it could be accepted by the colonial authorities while veiling its African character. Thus, it was given the name Cabildo de San Antonio de Congos Reales.⁵ Cabildos served as cultural centers for Africans and their descendents, providing both mutual aid and a space dedicated to practice of African traditions (Mendoza Lorenzo 1986).

Following the foundation of the Cabildo de San Antonio, others were established, tied to the lucumí and carabalí groups. The lucumí were numerous in Trinidad, yet their cabildos in Trinidad did not survive into the late twentieth century. The carabalí cabildo had no counterparts in Trinidad. This cabildo was seemingly short-lived in Trinidad, and

⁵ The *congos reales* are a specific sub-group of the Bantu in Cuba, originating from the Bacongo in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Bacongo were the largest Bantu ethnic group in Cuba, comprising 73.1% of the congo population (CIDMUC 1997, 20; López Valdés 2002, 271).

may have been absorbed into the Cabildo de San Antonio. An *abakuá*⁶ influence is also unlikely, as there were never branches (*potencias*) of this society in Trinidad. What is certain is that carabalí influence has marked the cabildo's character, especially in its musical instruments. The instruments of the tonada trinitaria are intimately tied to the Cabildo San Antonio, which plants them as creolized congo-carabalí creations.

Instruments of the Tonadas Trinitarias

The drums used in the tonada trinitaria are downsized versions of the large drum used in the Cabildo de San Antonio, called the *tambor yuka*. The yuka is a congo music and dance tradition in Cuba. Yuka is played with three tall, single-headed, cylindrical drums carved from a tree trunk. What sets Trinidad's yuka drum apart is both its use and its tuning system. It is used not only for yuka but for all of the ritual and dance musics of the Cabildo de San Antonio, including *makuta*, *bembé*, and *palo*. In Cuba, tuning systems are an important factor in designating the African ethnic origins of drums. The congo-derived tuning system generally consists of heads that are tacked or nailed onto the drum. Yet the yuka drum of Trinidad uses a characteristic tuning system of the carabalí: ropes and stakes. For this reason María Teresa Linares recognizes that:

the drums of Trinidad offer a regional typological variant of a tubular, cylindrical, wooden shell with the head attached with ropes and parietal tension stakes, resulting from a process of transculturation occurring during the nineteenth century between the congo and carabalí groups who mixed in the region of Trinidad-Sancti-Spíritus. (2006, 26)

Indeed, transculturation is a central process at work in Cuban culture, likewise

⁶ Abakuá refers to a secret male fraternal society originating in the Calabar region of Africa among the Efik (carabalí in Cuba). Similar to Masonry, the society was reestablished in Cuba by slaves and their descendents. They employ a set of drums similar to those found in the tonada trinitaria.

used to explain the creation of Afro-Cuban musics by Fernando Ortiz, who first used the term in his work *Contrapunteo del tabaco y azúcar* ([1940] 1978). In the same manner the yuka drum was recreated, so the drums of the tonada trinitaria emerged. The musicians made small versions of the yuka drum in order to make them more portable, maintaining the same tuning system and general construction. Constructed from a solid tree trunk and reaching almost to chest height, the yuka drum was not easily moved, and was played hanging from the waist while on the ground or leaning on a post. In context, the drums of the tonada trinitaria are less than a foot in height, lightweight, and can be played sitting, with the drums between the legs of the drummer, or hanging from a shoulder rope under the arm. Why were ambulatory drums needed? If we recall the tradition of Catholic processions in the streets, and the secularization of these practices, we have the answer to this question, as well as to the origin of the tonada trinitaria.

The secularization of Catholic processions by Trinidad's black population is a key to the organization of the tonada trinitaria groups. The Holy Week processions, which seem to have been similar to those celebrated in Andalusia (Castellanos 1981), were complemented by many other celebrations linked to the Church, the most important of which were the festivals of San Juan and San Pedro: June 24 and 29, respectively.⁷ These days were also marked by processions led by the Church and cabildos. As previously mentioned, the Cabildo de San Antonio was a sponsor of the nocturnal processions, and the Brotherhood of San Antonio – composed primarily of free blacks – was in charge of organizing these (León 1983). Therefore the free black population of Trinidad had a major hand in these processions, particularly the Cabildo de San Antonio

⁷ This became the period of carnival in Trinidad.

de Congos Reales. These processions were accompanied by musicians and singers, many of which were likely black. In colonial Cuba, music was one of the opportunities for employment prized by blacks. For them, it was a vehicle of upward mobility, whereas it was seen as a degrading occupation by whites. Just as in other areas of the Caribbean, elements of European military band music used in processions was reinterpreted and transformed by the black population. If the municipal band accompanied processions, as León (1983) claims, this would likely point to European military-processional instrumentation, such as snare drum, *bombo* (bass drum), and horns. This type of instrumentation has left its mark on carnival music practices in Trinidad as in the rest of Cuba. However linking this to the tonada trinitaria is not so clear-cut, unless we look at the names of the drums.

The three drums used in the tonada trinitaria are called – from highest pitched to lowest – *quinto*, *un solo golpe*, and *bombo*. All three names are Spanish, as are the names for the rest of the instruments. The lowest pitch drum clearly is linked to the idea of the bass drum, hence the influence of European military bands in Trinidad is likely. The word “quinto” is used widely in Cuba to denote the highest pitched improvisatory drum, as in the *rumba* tradition. Its origin is Spanish, where it referred to the idea of improvisation of the high pitched stringed instrument called the *requinto*.⁸ The middle-pitched drum is called the “one hit only,” because this is the pattern it executes in its rhythmic base.

The other instruments in the tonada trinitaria include a *campana* and a *güiro*. The *campana*, meaning “bell,” is an iron hoe blade struck with a thick metal beater. The

⁸ From *requinto* comes the verb *requintear*, which is the action of playing and improvising on the *requinto*.

güiro is a gourd scraper common throughout Cuba and the Caribbean area. While the hoe blade is a regular occurrence in Afro-Cuban ritual music, the güiro is not. The güiro is of indigenous origin, generally associated in Cuba and the Caribbean with peasant music. This is expressed in the Cuban expression “*al son del tiple y el güiro*,” which is connotative of *música guajira* (country music).

These instruments are a primary link to the countryside, one to the *guajiros* (peasants) and the other to slavery. The guajiros, who were largely descended from Canarian families (or themselves Canarian) were white or *blaqueado* (“whitish/whitened”). Blaqueado, as explained by Enrique Zayas, is not synonymous



Figure 1-3. The instruments of the tonadas trinitarias. From left to right: quinto, bombo, campana, güiro, un solo golpe.

with white. Rather, it would mean “mostly white,” signifying that a person in that color category may have had a black grandmother or the like (Zayas June 10, 2009). These guajiros were well known for their reunions in which music and food were central. Guajiro parties, or *guateques*, featured the singing of *tonadas* (sung verses) and *décimas* (ten-line improvised texts) accompanied by strummed stringed instruments (some combination of *tiple*, *tres*, *guitarra*, and *laúd*) and güiro.

The Valle de los Ingenios was home to Canarians, guajiros, African and creole slaves, Saint Domingue exiles, and white plantation employees. They lived on sugar, tobacco, and coffee plantations primarily. Guajiros were dedicated primarily to smaller scale farming of these and other crops. Not only would slaves have been exposed to the music of their guajiro neighbors, but they likely would have traded with them on a regular basis. Some slaves had provision grounds, and traded pigs and vegetables with the guajiros (Barnet 1976). Further, the guajiros and slaves shared a similar low economic status, albeit not equals. Canarians and guajiros who owned tobacco plantations also frequently owned some slaves, who often worked alongside their masters in the field.

The tonada trinitaria was known at various points in its history by the names *tango* and *fandango*. “Tango” and “fandango” were general terms used to describe African-derived dances in the Americas (Carpentier 1979). The term “tango” is Bantu in origin, and “fandango” comes from Andalusia, where it was a lower class form of music featuring voice and guitar. “Tango” was the name first given to the tradition, yet it did not remain in use for long (Zayas 2001). By at least the late nineteenth century, the tradition was known as “fandango.” Following the Revolution, the tradition was labeled “tonadas trinitarias” as a result of its entrance into the realm of folklore supported by the government.

The name tonada trinitaria not only specifies its specific origin, but ties it to the music of the countryside, romanticized as truly Cuban and nationalistic, not to mention primarily white. “Tonada” means “tune,” and is flexibly applied in Spain and Latin America to reference song texts accompanied by guitar. In Cuba the term is generally

used in the realm of guajiro music, which has marked influence from southern Spain and the Canary Islands, for example the use of improvised poetic texts. The *tonadas campesinas* – the tonadas of the countryside sung by guajiros – are based on a melodic and rhythmic structure which repeats with each tonada. Each tonada comprises a verse or set of verses. In the tonada trinitaria the melodic and textual structure is very similar to the tonada campesina. Further, in both practices there exists a tradition of improvisation on a common theme. These lead singers - called *guías* (“guides”) in the tonada trinitaria or *gallos* in the tonadas campesinas or *décimas* - perform this function, facing competitors in a friendly battle.

In explaining the slaves’ musical creations, Zayas (June 10, 2009) posed the following question: in an effort to produce music, what did the slave have at his disposal? A table? A wooden wall or door? Perhaps a hoe blade, a machete, or an old chair with a rawhide seat? The fallacy that African music is synonymous with drumming is often perpetuated in Cuba as it is around the globe. Music in Africa is as diverse – or more diverse – than that found in Europe or Asia. The African is not inherently rhythmic nor is he or she a born dancer. Fernando Ortiz combated what he saw as these racist and stereotypical views imposed by whites. He argued that the basic musical conceptions were different between Europeans and Africans; therefore judging Afro-Cuban music from a European aesthetical view was invalid. Drawing examples from Afro-Cuban music, Ortiz declared that Africans valued rhythm as a central stabilizing component. Their drumming did indeed contain intricate melodies, as did their singing, complex harmonies (Ortiz [1950] 2001).

The elements of Afro-Cuban music are cultural products of specific African

ethnicities which underwent a process of transculturation in an environment dominated by slavery and European hegemony. Therefore, the predominance of drums and percussion in Afro-Cuban music do not indicate that the slaves were unfamiliar with stringed instruments or complex choral singing; rather this reflects both the importance of percussion to the dominant ethnic groups (lucumí, congo, carabalí, arará), and the materials available to reconstruct instruments from memory in the context of slavery. In the Valle de los Ingenios, the slave who wanted to make music reached for what was at hand, be it a table or a wall. Conversely, slaves recreated that with which they were familiar, drawing from memory, ethnic background, cultural contact, and working with available materials. Many Afro-Cuban instruments developed with this process in the context of slavery. Hoe blades, drums, wooden boxes, and gourds are commonly found in Afro-Cuban ritual and profane music. Furthermore, collective music-making was not limited to free time, but also occurred during work time. Work songs were found among cane-cutters and other occupations; slaves may have been obliged to sing at times by overseers in order to limit friendly conversation between the workers (Zayas June 10, 2009).

CHAPTER 2 ORIGINS OF THE TONADA TRINITARIA

While some attribute the origin of the tonada trinitaria to the Valle de los Ingenios, others trace it to the cabildo or to the festivities of San Juan. It is certain that the roots of the tonada trinitaria lie in the valley; after all, it was this valley which provided the economic and dietary sustenance of Trinidad. The influences of the tonadas campesinas and the güiro, both of which came from guajiro music, are clearly an Afro-Cuban adaptation. Yet it is not likely that the tonada trinitaria, which requires an organized group of singers and a set of drums descended from the yuka drum of the Cabildo de San Antonio existed among the slaves of the Valle de los Ingenios. The free time required to organize such a group simply would have not been available to slaves. The musical manifestations of the slaves were limited due to the harsh environment of slavery. Furthermore, the link to the Catholic practices of the city and the Cabildo de San Antonio and the level of creolization evident in the music clearly position the origin of the organized tradition with the urban black population of Trinidad itself.

Links to Saint's Day Processions

The tonada trinitaria also has a processional character which is linked to the religious celebrations of urban Trinidad. The transculturation evident in the drums and their tuning systems is a result of the influences of the congo and carabalí cabildos on each other, both of which were located in Trinidad itself. While slaves led a life of limited freedom of expression, the free colored population involved in the African cabildos would have been able to better organize musical and processional activities. And indeed they did. As previously explained, the Brotherhood of San Antonio and the Cabildo de San Antonio, led by free blacks, had important roles in organizing the

processions dedicated to the saints. These led naturally to Afro-Cuban reinterpretations of the Spanish (Andalusian) traditions. In addition to the religious processions themselves, the birth of secular musico-processional traditions, such as the *tonada trinitaria* (and later carnival), took place beginning in the 1840s or 1850s, coinciding closely with the establishment of the Cabildo de San Antonio in 1845. Another element which ties the *tonada trinitaria* to the San Juan festivities is the tradition of face-washing in the river, which is a reinterpretation of the baptism performed by Saint John (García et al. 1972). While this element has long been lost, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the *fandangueros* (fandango/*tonada trinitaria* musicians, also known as *tonaderos*) performed through the night and at dawn proceeded to the river bank. Here they washed their faces to “leave behind [in the water] the bad spirits picked up in the streets,” which also testifies to African (especially congo) beliefs involving malevolent spirits and the cleansing power of water (García et al. 1972, 75; Esquenazi Pérez 2009). The practice of washing oneself with water is also found in Venezuela, Brazil, and Puerto Rico, where at midnight thousands of people go to the beaches to dunk themselves in the ocean. Garcia (et al. 1972) ties the tradition in Cuba to the superstition that if one did not cleanse himself with water on the day of San Juan, bugs would fall on him. The following *tonada trinitaria* text illustrates the connections to the San Juan festivities:

Qué lindas son, qué lindas son,
las mañanas de San Juan, qué lindas son

[How beautiful, how beautiful,
the mornings of Saint John, how beautiful]

Another interesting tie to the festivities of San Juan is described by García (et al. 1972), comparing the tradition to that practiced in Venezuela and other areas of America. In the towns of Yaracuy, Carboleos, Aragua, the Federal District, and Miranda, the 24th of June – the day of San Juan – was celebrated with drumming and festivities. Trinidad, historically linked to northern South America as a point of departure and arrival of mail services and commerce, was influenced by the religious practices of Colombia and Venezuela – particularly in the importance placed on Catholic traditions. Thus, in Trinidad, the tonadas trinitarias evolved as an Afro-Cuban secular manifestation of these religious processions. Furthermore, the link with Venezuela was confirmed through the mutual presence of revolution against Spain. Narciso López, an early leader of Cuban revolutionary activity and governor of Trinidad, was of Venezuelan origin. The link to the Cuban independence wars will be examined in-depth later in this chapter. But did the tonada trinitaria emerge only as a manifestation linked to the festivities of San Juan? García (et al. 1972, 74) explains

According to what we have heard, the tonadas trinitarias took place on the eve of San Juan, when the groups of fandangueros set out primarily from the barrios Jibabuco and Pim-pá. In the Pim-pá, they would gather under the tamarind tree which still exists (on Aguacate Street between Rosario and Colón [Streets]), and accompanying themselves with drums – quinto, requinto, and bombo – without any any type of saint's image as done in the processions, they sang their songs (the famous tonadas).

Enrique Zayas (June 10, 2009) argues that the tonada trinitaria did indeed exist in the Valle de los Ingenios, performed by slaves in their sparse free time. As previously mentioned, during its earliest years, this music it was called tango. The Bantu origin of the term ties it to the congo slaves. Tango was a generalized term referring to African dances and music, yet it is considered by Zayas to have designated the music of the

tonada trinitaria in Trinidad during this time. This period, in which the slaves lived in barracks in the plantations of the Valle de los Ingenios, may indeed be the origin of the tonada trinitaria. Yet this cannot be proven due to a lack of documentation. It is possible that this tango simply was not documented until it arrived in the urban center of Trinidad, or that other variants existed. The slaves' lives in the valley would have been far removed and much less documented than activities occurring in Trinidad. What Zayas seems to suggest is that the tonada trinitaria did not appear spontaneously in Trinidad's Cabildo de San Antonio; it must have had a rural antecedent. We must also examine the economic and demographic history of the mid-nineteenth century in Trinidad. If Trinidad's peak sugar production took place during the early 1840s, the overwhelming majority of the black population would have been located in the valley.

By the late 1840s and 1850s, the downturn of Trinidad's sugar economy caused an exodus from the Valle de los Ingenios to the urban center of Trinidad, (as well as to the neighboring developing city of Cienfuegos). This represented a movement of the area's Afro-Cuban culture bearers from rural to urban. Furthermore, among the working class labor force in Trinidad there were many *zafreiros* (harvest-time cane cutters). This created a connection between the urban center and the valley, whereby every winter – the time of the sugar harvest – the *zafreiros* moved temporarily to the valley to cut cane. During the latter part of the nineteenth century as Cuban slavery was transformed with the introduction of increased free labor and eventual abolition in 1886, *zafreiros* was a common occupation for the lower classes and colored population. In Trinidad, although the sugar industry had declined, it still represented the primary economic activity. In harvest time, there would have been masses of people involved with the sugar

plantations of the Valle de los Ingenios. Anselmo “Joseíto” Lares (2009) affirms the importance of this connection as he explained that the recognized “fathers” of the tonadas trinitarias were in fact zafreros themselves.

Patricio Gascón and Tando Villa

Patricio Gascón and Tando Villa are popularly considered the fathers of the tonadas trinitarias. By the late 1860s these men each led an organized group of singers and drummers, employing the same drums as are still used today. Fernando “Tando” Villa, a friend of Gascón, subsequently organized his own group from the rival Pimpá (also called Simpá or Tamarindo) barrio. Although most of the evidence seems to point to the late 1860s (around the beginning of the Ten Years’ War – 1868) as the time Gascón and Villa were first organizing these groups, some suggest this was as early as 1851. Zayas, citing newspaper archives from 1851, explains that these groups were permitted to proceed through the streets of Trinidad (Zayas 2001). It is possible that these groups existed before this, yet were simply not documented in print until this date. Manuel Quesada Puig, a tonada trinitaria musician interviewed by Pérez, also traces the tradition back to – at least – 1851, speculating that at this time they were using the same drums employed today (Pérez 1986, 52). Ramiro Guerra cites a historical description of what may have been a tonada trinitaria in 1846. F.D. Altanaga, a contemporary observer, recorded a mass of people proceeding through the streets accompanied by “typical music of the time,” with long drums, hoe blades, a *botija* (large bottle used as a bass instrument), and a chorus (Guerra 1989, 49). While long drums are not characteristic of the tonada trinitaria, this may have been an earlier form or closely related tradition. While the tonada trinitaria may have hitherto existed,

it is not until Patricio Gascón emerges with his daughters from the barrio of Jibabuco to parade through the other barrios of the town, nourishing himself [his group] with the voices of the rest of the town which accompanies the group, that this form of choral music takes its definite form and style, during the . . . years of '68. (Guerra 1989)

Gascón and Villa were both *zafreiros*, working in the Valle de los Ingenios part of the year, most likely living in barracks during this time. This suggests these men were freed blacks who had their homes in the urban center of Trinidad. The free workers on the plantations would have comprised both whites and blacks of similar economic stature, and they would have likely worked alongside slaves. Their free status, however, would have allowed them certain liberties not accorded to their brethren in bondage. As previously explained, the slaves were often encouraged to sing during work, and were allowed limited free time in which they could entertain themselves with music and dance. With free colored and white workers of urban and rural backgrounds coexisting with slaves and surrounded by *guajiros* who expressed their woes through *décimas*, this musical environment was clearly conducive to the formation of new musical forms. Furthermore, during the beginning of the struggle for independence, Trinidad was a hotbed of rebel activity.

Many of these men would have united – whites, free blacks, slaves, and *guajiros* – under the common cause of fighting the tyranny of colonial rule. Many of the main sugar areas of the central and western regions of Cuba were less involved in the rebel cause than in the East. Yet this is due to the fact that the East was less developed as an area of large-scale sugar plantations. The sugar plantation life of the central and western zones was little affected by rebel activity. In Trinidad, had the war occurred during the 1840s when large-scale sugar plantations were dominant, the scene may

have been very much like that of the western and central regions. But Trinidad's sugar economy had changed drastically. The crisis it suffered caused the Valle de los Ingenios's demise as a major sugar producer.

By the 1850s and 1860s the majority of the sugar producers had left the Valle de los Ingenios, leaving Trinidad decrepit and cut off. Furthermore, Trinidad still remained isolated geographically, and the economic activity of its ports declined, contributing even more to this isolation. If the large-scale sugar plantations represented stability and conservative views in favor of slavery and the Spanish crown, Trinidad no longer had this. Trinidad itself would have more closely resembled eastern Cuba – cut off from the wealthy colonial center of Havana, free from the centrality of large sugar plantations, and economically and politically marginalized. Their communities would have been composed primarily of economically deprived workers with a healthy dose of African influence and a sizeable black population. For this reason they were centers of anti-colonial activity.

Rebel Activities and the Wars of Independence

Although Trinidad had a history of rebel activity dating to the first half of the nineteenth century, the effects of the crisis were critical in strengthening this tendency. In 1851, Trinidad's rebels coordinated with those of Puerto Príncipe (now Camagüey). Men were recruited from the city and the plantations, yet were easily defeated by Spanish troops (Castellanos 1989, 52). Narciso López himself, one of the most important rebel leaders of Cuba, was at the center of Trinidad's rebel activity during the first half of the nineteenth century. In fact, he himself was governor of Trinidad, and as such established the city as a center of rebel activity in the island. Quirino Amézaga, a

native *trinitario* of African-Portuguese background, was a captain in the Ten Years' War. He became a martyr following his execution in Trinidad. Juan José Armenteros was the leader of a large group of slaves who revolted on January 6 1838 (the Day of Kings), setting fire to cane fields, *haciendas*, sugar mills, and coffee fields. Trinidad can trace this rebelliousness to its days as a center for contraband trade and piracy. This tendency also set it apart from the rest of the west and central regions, and the downfall of its economy and the exodus of many of the upper class planter families left Trinidad much as it had been – economically and politically – before the success of the sugar economy there: isolated and poor. Stripped of its wealth and status, Trinidad's rebel character was once again revealed. After the Ten Years War, Trinidad's generals continued to play a leading role in the rebel cause. In the second independence war (1895-1898), Trinidad's rebels once again burned cane fields, and by 1899 only two sugar mills remained of the fifty which had dominated the Valle de los Ingenios in the 1840s. Trinidad's involvement in the independence movement coincided with the formation of the *tonadas trinitarias*. Joseíto (Lares 2009) explains that Gascón himself, along with the first composers of *tonadas* were volunteers of the rebel army (known as *Mambís*). For this reason many of the *tonadas* surviving today contain patriotic themes, such as the *tonada* glorifying the Cuban war hero Maceo:

Una corona al General Maceo
Que los cubanos debemos de brindar
Una corona de pura brillante
Que ni el sol la pudiera empañar

[We Cubans should offer
A crown to General Maceo
A crown of pure brilliance
That not even the sun could outshine]

Another tonada venerates the Siboney as an icon of the Cuban nationality:

Viva el Siboney nené,
Viva por quien moriré
Pero viva esa bandera otra vez
Por la que yo muero,
La que yo muero,
Yo moriré

[Long live the Siboney,
Long live those I would die for
Long live that flag
For which I will die,
For which I will die,
I will die]

Suero Reguera presents an interesting hypothesis as to the origin of the tonada trinitaria:

It is known that after the war of '68 tonada trinitarias are sung in Trinidad, whose first leader was Patricio Gascón, considered the founder of this genre in the town. It was he who, after the war, brought with him small drums with wedges [for the tension system] of African origin, similar to those used in the cabildo, but of smaller size (it is believed that the congos cut down these [cabildo] drums in order to allow for better mobility during the war. (1972, 85)

This explanation seems to make sense. In this case, the three small drums would not have come into existence prior to the war – there would have not been a necessity for ambulatory drums. There are, however, a number of different possibilities. The drums may have existed prior to the war, being used in Trinidad for music processions. However this seems unlikely, as prior accounts of black processional music – in 1846 and 1851 – do not reference the use of three small drums. The only account of this is Manuel Quesada Puig, who could only speculate that the same drums were used at that time (Pérez 1986, 52). Zayas (June 10, 2009) professes that Gascón and Villa had

their groups already in 1851, but this would have been impossible; Gascón was born in 1840 and would have been only 11 years old (Guerra 1989).

The Valle de los Ingenios and the Cabildo de Congos Reales

Both Gascón and Villa resided in Trinidad, and were known as well-accomplished drummers and singers in the Cabildo de San Antonio de Congos Reales (Zayas 2009). Not only does this explain their musical talent and background, but this means they were likely of congo descent themselves. They would have been musical cohorts, and were part of the central community of congos and the primary Afro-Cuban cabildo. Therefore, as musicians, zafreros, and war volunteers, they likely spent time performing music outside of the cabildo, outside of Trinidad, in the Valle de los Ingenios (during the harvest) and wherever the war may have taken them. Thus it is likely that these men – Gascón being cited as the initiator – perfected smaller versions of the yuka drum for easy mobility. During their free time in the barracks in the valley or in wartime, the smaller drums would allow them to entertain themselves and others, combining their congo musical background with the guajiro musical styles heard in the countryside.

Zafreros or war volunteers of guajiro background likely sang tonadas campesinas and décimas to the accompaniment of stringed instruments. Since the time of slavery, blacks (free and enslaved) and whites had fraternized in the cantinas and markets in and around plantations in rural areas. Here, they played games, gambled, sang, and danced, exchanging cultural elements. The music would have included singing tonadas campesinas and dancing the *zapateo*, both guajiro traditions (Linares 1974). An “Africanized” version of these tonadas campesinas likely produced the songs and rhythms of the tonada trinitaria. It is also possible that the three drums resulted from an

abakuá or carabalí influence. It is clear that the tuning of these drums with staves is a carabalí characteristic, yet this seems to have occurred in the congo cabildo first, with the yuka drum. In the Cabildo de San Antonio de Congos Reales only one large drum is used for the musical liturgy, with a *katá* (two sticks striking the shell) played on the side of the bottom of the drum by a second drummer. The three tonada drums resemble abakuá drums in size, shape, and tuning, yet an abakuá *potencia* (center) never existed in Trinidad. Was Gascón exposed to abakuá members during the war? From where did the use of three drums suddenly arise? Furthermore, the use of the hoe blade is not prominent in the Cabildo de San Antonio in their interpretations of the congo liturgical music. Its use may be the result of borrowing from other African influences.

Joseíto (Lares 2009) recounts a story about Gascón and his cohorts in the barracks of the valley:

. . . and so he wrote some tonadas at the end of the war of sixty- . . . '98⁹. . .
. and so at that time they were playing in the barracks, because they were
doing the harvest, and so during the nights they would sing and play. . . and
the governor heard them and sent for them to stop. . .

Muy buenas noches mi amigo leal
El gobernador me mandó a buscar
Silencio en el barracón

[Good evening my dear friend
The governor sent me
To ask for silence in the barracks]

. . . and so they stop, but after fifteen or twenty days Patricio [Gascón] gets
the players together and they go to see the governor, and they sang:

⁹ Joseíto's reference to the war of "sixty... '98" likely referenced that of '68, as all sources point to the tonadas being established well before the war of 1898. This was probably a mistake on his part, yet I believe it is important to present his exact words.

Yo le pido a su merced
Que me deje cantar
Que me deje cantar
Que me deje cantar

[I ask your grace
To let me sing
To let me sing
To let me sing]

It was like a slave asking that of him. And the governor said “very well, go on your way, and I’ll think about it.” After a few days he sent for them to be told that they could play.

Alternatively, this song could have been composed by slaves who were in the valley, but they would not have been able to go freely to the governor’s palace to petition him through song. It is likely that it was indeed free blacks who petitioned the governor, responding to a ban on drumming. Bans on “African” drumming and dancing were common in Cuba in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Other recorded or surviving tonadas do not suggest direct origin among slaves. The lyrics speak of patriotism, love, religion, and social situations common in barrio life. These were products of urban free blacks with ties to the cabildo, the valley, and the war. The poetry exemplified in some of them suggests that the authors must have had at least minimal education. The lyrical content not only suggests the urban background of the authors – addressing the life of the barrios – but dates of origin that cannot have been much earlier than the Ten Years’ War. The level of patriotism and the centrality of barrio life exemplified life in Trinidad during this time. During the Ten Years’ War patriotism would have reached an unprecedented peak. The number of blacks in the barrios would have risen drastically following the sugar crisis in the late 1840s. By the 1860s and 1870s there would have been a large number of established black workers in

the barrios. This atmosphere would have been conducive to the formation of new, localized traditions, because Trinidad was isolated following the collapse of the economy. Let us examine the musical conditions of Trinidad in general during this time.

Trinidad's Musical Environment

Trinidad was home to a rich musical environment in the nineteenth century. Following the advent of the city's first musicians in the early sixteenth century, little documentation exists that deals with Trinidad's musical activity. However, at the end of the sixteenth century there are documented purchases of strings for vihuela. This indicates that those first musicians – vihuela players themselves – may have left behind students, or that new musicians had arrived by this time. Zayas (June 11, 2009) hypothesizes that cultural development would have grown alongside economic development in Trinidad. This indeed seems to have been the case, as there is a growth of documented musical activity in Trinidad beginning in the late eighteenth century, coinciding with the rise of Trinidad as a wealthy sugar producer. There existed a sizeable upper class of landowning families, many of whom were of European or North American origin. As Trinidad was one of the largest sugar producers in the world by 1840, local elite had the means to hire music teachers for their children or send them to study in Europe – a huge honor – as in the case of José Julián Jiménez (1823-1880). An orchestra director himself, his father was also a musical director and his son Lico became one of the most famous Cuban pianists of the late nineteenth century. As early as 1808, the director of music of the Cathedral of Havana – the most distinguished post in Cuba – was a trinitario: José Franciso Ransoli y Navarro. Catalina Berroa (1819-1911) was an organist and musical director of the Parroquia Mayor (main parish) of

Trinidad. She was a music professor who produced successful students, such as Lico. Her songs became very popular among serenading trovadores in Cuba.

This high level of cultural activity was supported by the wealthy families, and in 1840 the splendid Teatro Brunet (Brunet Theater) was opened by Don Luís Nicolás de la Cruz y Muñoz, or Count Brunet. This and other theaters were the setting for musical and theatrical performances patronized by the upper classes. In the arena of popular vernacular music, the local variants of *son* were also developed during this time, according to Zayas. These included the *bunguero* and later the *son trinitario*, in addition to the local style of carnival music. Trinidad's variants of *son* were rooted in the guitar-based music of Spanish descent which was combined with certain African characteristics, as in the case of the *son oriental* (from Oriente, Cuba's eastern region). The former did not grow from the latter, as some local theories suggest; rather, it is more likely that regional variants of *son* existed across the island independently, wherever these basic characteristics were present.

The *tonada trinitaria*, like the *son trinitario*, is a variant of a larger musical occurrence seen in other areas of the island. While the *son* variants were based on the basic combination of Hispanic stringed instruments, African-derived rhythms, and voice, the *tonada trinitaria* and other urban choral Afro-Cuban manifestations were based on community groups representing barrios who took to the streets to perform and – at times – compete with one another. During the same general time period, similar groups were found in Havana, Matanzas, and Sancti Spíritus called *coros de clave* (clave choruses).

The Coros de Clave

The coros de clave were large, organized choruses made up primarily of Afro-Cubans, usually representing a certain barrio. Here, “clave” refers primarily to the main genre employed by these groups, and also the instrument employed often in the accompaniment. Although some scholars, such as Ned Sublette (2004), suggest that the name and origin of these choruses are tied to the tradition of working-class choruses established by Anselmo Clavé in Catalonia, there is little evidence to establish this. Others suggest that these choruses existed in Cuba before those of Clavé. While community choruses may have also occurred in West African traditions, Esquenazi (2007) argues they were created in the image of the Spanish choruses proliferating in Havana and Matanzas in the nineteenth century. Orovio provides a simple and clear explanation: the clave song was created in the Afro-Cuban barrios near the port of Havana. From there it spread into the city of Havana and later to Matanzas, Cárdenas, and Sancti Spiritus in the early twentieth century. The choruses performed in the style of Spanish choral ensembles yet due to the high concentration of Afro-Cubans in these neighborhoods, African characteristics entered the music as well, observable in the use of instruments and rhythms (Orovio 2004, 54).

It is clear, however, that these groups functioned and organized in a way that showed a high European influence – more so than say, the tonadas trinitarias. They were highly organized and met regularly to rehearse their repertoire, which was often written by the director. These groups had a mixed chorus of males and females, the highest voices of whom were the *clarines* or *clarinas* – usually women. The guía led the songs and established the tonality by way of a *diana* (melody sung with nonsense

syllables), the *decimista* was in charge of improvising or performing décimas, and a *ensor* insured the textual quality of the music. The claves were full texts – similar to trova – sung by the entire chorus. The call-and-response characteristic seen in many Afro-Cuban traditions such as the tonada trinitaria was not present. Claves were accompanied by a slow cadence based in three-beat subdivisions at first played by a *viola* (small drum similar to a stringless kora or banjo), later joined by clave and different combinations of guitar, botija (jug), and son instruments (this latter adaptation of son instruments occurred only in Sancti Spíritus). The first instruments were African or Afro-Cuban in origin, showing a creative combination of African characteristics and predominantly Hispanic choral traditions. The *coros de clave* did not grow out of a religious-processional tradition. Rather, it seems that they grew from the general tradition of Hispanic ambulatory choral groups, visiting different homes and public places to perform on days of festivities. Two well-known choruses – La Unión and El Arpa de Oro – were at their most active during the Christmas season. These choruses were the precedent on which later *coros de rumba* (rumba choruses) of the early-mid twentieth century were based, followed by the professional rumba ensembles of the 1950s.

The *coros de clave* offer an interesting comparison to the tonadas trinitarias, as they share a number of similarities. Is it possible there was influence between the two traditions? Many parallels exist between the two, and some scholars such as Esquenazi Pérez (2009) describe the tonada trinitaria as a local variant of a *coro-de-clave*-type manifestation, yet there is no theory or evidence that suggests direct contact or influence between musicians of the two traditions. Both were influenced by the

musical environment of their cities in the nineteenth century. Most authors suggest that the *coros de clave* originated in the latter part of the century – around the 1880s – although others suggest they existed much earlier. Most scholarly opinions, however, attribute an earlier date of origin to the *tonada trinitaria* – these were established by no later than the 1870s. As previously noted, following the 1840s and 1850s, Trinidad was highly isolated from the rest of the island, so communication between Trinidad’s working-class musicians with those of Havana and Matanzas would have been limited. For this reason the *tonadas trinitarias* never had the opportunity to become popular outside of Trinidad, and it remained a localized tradition. The *coros de clave*, on the other hand, were popular in both Havana and Matanzas (in Matanzas they were known as *bandos*). From here they traveled to Sancti Spíritus by way of Juan Echemendía, a director from Havana who established a chorus in the town (León 1984, 69).

The *claves* used melodies, harmonies, and the general musical expression inherited from Spain, and even *guajiro* rhythms, according to Orovio (2004). This was also true for the *tonada trinitaria*, albeit to a lesser extent. While the *tonada* groups performed with a chorus, using the same basic harmonic elements as the *claves*, lyrical song texts were not used. Rather, the singing style was closer to that of the *guajiros*, in terms of the melodic lines.¹⁰ Furthermore, the style of antiphonal singing, featuring repetition of a short chorus between which the *guía* improvises, is a West African characteristic. The improvisation itself is not only African, however; the *guajiros* also improvised on given themes in their *décimas*. What sets the *tonada* choruses apart from much of the Afro-Cuban liturgical music – especially that of the *congos*, from which

¹⁰ These musical aspects will be explored in depth in Chapter 3.

it drew much influence – is their melodic inflection and their length. The melodic inflection, as previously explained, draws on that of the tonadas campesinas and décimas of the guajiros. The choruses comprising the tonadas trinitarias are generally longer than those sung in the liturgy of the congos, including songs of *palo* (from the Bantu-Cuban religion of Palo Monte) and *makuta* (a congo secular music-dance form), both of which were sung in the Cabildo de San Antonio. The latter are composed of short choruses made up of one line or a few words, often in Bantu-Spanish dialect. The tonada trinitaria choruses, on the other hand, commonly contain two to four lines and encompass a wider melodic range. Both the claves and tonada groups used a rhythmic marker as means of organization and reference. The viola performed this function in the earliest coros de clave (later adding other instruments), and the campana does the same in the tonadas trinitarias. The use of rhythm as a reference for musical stability is seen in virtually all genres of Afro-Cuban music, such as rumba, yuka, bembé, *conga*, and *batá*.

Zayas (1997), in his classification of the genres of Cuban music, groups the coros de clave and tonadas trinitarias together with the variants of rumba, conga, *mozambique*, *tahona*, comparsas, and coros de rumba. Apart from sharing a strong Afro-Cuban influence, they originated in marginal neighborhoods among working-class non-professional musicians as community-based, secular, creole manifestations. These groups often represented barrios and sometimes competed with one another.

The coros de clave, basing their activities around days of festivities such as Christmas and New Year, often would meet in the public arena, exchanging songs in an effort to outdo each other. The same seems to have been true of the tonada groups,

although this seems to have occurred only in the early years (late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). Joseíto (Lares 2009) explains that the two first tonada groups (those of Gascón and Villa established around the time of the Ten Years' War) independently chose many of the same days to perform. As Gascón and Villa were friends and musical cohorts of the Cabildo de San Antonio, it is likely that they would have been aware of each other's plans, as these were the only tonada groups in existence at the time. However, it is possible that these groups independently chose many of the same days, as these were the primary dates celebrated by the entire city of Trinidad. These dates included the celebrations of San Juan, San Pedro (coinciding with the height of the local month-long carnival) as well as Christmas Eve, New Years, and other religious holidays. These days were characterized by street music, public dances held in homes or institutions such as the cabildos, and general merriment. As prime dates for street performances, Gascón and Villa could have chosen many of the same days. While the two groups were from two different barrios – Gascón from the Popa and Villa from the Pimpá – they would have performed in many of the same parts of the small town of Trinidad. Eventually – out of coincidence or mutual planning – they would have met in the streets. In the manner of the coros de clave, the two groups would have performed for each other – perhaps taking turns – in order to show off their musical skills.

Tonada Themes and Performance Contexts

These groups primarily performed the tonadas as serenades, at the homes of other musicians or enthusiasts. Many of the songs were addressed to certain unnamed persons, dealing with a particular situation. While some songs dealt with love,

patriotism, or scandalous social situations, a type of tonada also developed to address opposing groups. This type of tonada, called *puya* (literally “goad” or “pointed rod”), acted as a friendly – or not-so-friendly – poking-of-fun toward the opposing group. Puya themes were also used by the coros de clave; they asserted the first group’s superiority in some way or another, perhaps by describing a negative characteristic of the second. It should be noted that in the tonadas campesinas and décimas of the guajiros, two lead singers in competition often verbally bashed one another in their improvisations, asserting one’s superior talent while criticizing the shortcomings of the other. The guías of the tonadas trinitarias performed the same function in their improvisations, according to the prevailing theme of the chorus text. The following three puyas were sung to me by Puchi.

Anoche como a la una te vi yo
Anoche como a la una te vi yo
Cuando los gallos cantaban
Me hice de la vista gorda

[Around one [o’clock] last night I saw you
Around one last night I saw you
When the roosters were crowing
I acted as if I didn’t notice]

This song was directed at a certain person, as were the majority of puyas. This text implies that the unnamed person (perhaps a member of another group or a rival barrio) was up to something scandalous at one o’clock in the morning. The composer is indicating that he knows something is going on. This may have involved unacceptable – yet common – social behavior such as adultery or prostitution. The following example accuses a woman of unethical behavior, such as prostitution:

Yo no lo puedo creer
Yo no lo puedo creer

Que una mujer sola
Pague su casa y se mantenga
Sin ofender a su honor
Yo no lo puedo creer

[I can't believe
I can't believe
That a single woman by herself
Can pay her house and support herself
Without offending her honor
I can't believe it]

Another tonada shames a woman for being out enjoying herself while her husband is home in bed.

Ese accidente que a ti te da
Ese accidente que a ti te da
Tu marido está en la cama
Y tú bailando en el Pimpá
¡Tan sinvergüenza!

[That mishap [or misadventure] that you undertake
That mishap that you undertake
Your husband is in bed
And you're in the Pimpá dancing
How shameless!]

Another tonada seemingly tries to mend a situation between two friends after a situation in which the composer may have sung or dedicated something to the lover of a friend. Many of these referred to a situation (or gossip) which may have been known by a few or by the town. This tonada, taken from the list of tonada texts compiled by Suero Reguera (1972) appears to have a hint of satire.

Y yo se la dediqué con la mejor intención
Sin querer a ofender a mi amigo
De mi estimación

[And I dedicated it to her with my best intentions
Without meaning to offend my friend
Of highest esteem]

Guerra (1989) describes how the two groups would meet during the day of San Juan to compete. These competitions were for the most part friendly, yet some ended in fights when puya themes were taken seriously. The same tendency towards violence was found at times among the coros de clave and the later coros de rumba, whose texts sometimes directly criticized specific rival groups. Such was not the case with the tonada groups; no texts exist which are aimed specifically at an opposing group. Rather, the puyas of the tonadas trinitarias were aimed indirectly at certain occurrences of particular members or residents.

At daybreak following a night of playing, the tonada groups would proceed to the river bank to wash themselves, and then join the day festivities (Guerra 1989). The groups' activities also included other religious and patriotic holidays and celebrations – patriotic holidays established after independence of course – such as New Year's Eve, Christmas Eve, the Day of Kings (January 6th), the day of the proclamation of the republic (May 20th), and the Day of San Antonio (June 13th), among others (CIDMUC 1997).

Hence, the earliest tonada groups seem to have performed in two primary types of occasions: serenades and group competitions. The first type involved one group traversing the neighborhood, performing songs of love, satire, and social commentary. These themes could have been performed on any date, without a need for special occasion. The second type – meetings between two groups – would have called for satire and puya themes. We must also make the distinction between the dates these types of performances fell on. Religious and patriotic occasions would have entailed the performance of songs with complimentary themes. Therefore, these themes and

the meetings between the two groups originated with and were tied to these days of public celebration. The development of love and social commentary themes were tied to the practice of an individual group's serenade activity, which was free from calendar restrictions.

All evidence withstanding, it is safe to say that the tonada trinitaria tradition draws influences from the slave experience in the Valle de los Ingenios but crystallized in Trinidad in the mid-nineteenth century among the urban black population, intimately tied to the Cabildo de San Antonio and the San Juan festivities. It is feasible, however, that an early form of the tonada trinitaria developed among the slaves of the valley, which was then transported to Trinidad and organized in the barrios.

Hence the tonada trinitaria became established in Trinidad, to be passed on to subsequent generations through family lines and other social ties as an oral tradition. The tonada trinitaria groups not only interpreted the tonadas, whose texts reflected the social life of the barrios, but *rumbitas* or *rumbas*, which are in fact expressions of what Cuban musicologists classify as *rumba managua*, an old tradition of congo extraction. The tonada trinitaria groups also incorporate *columbia*¹¹ at times, although to a lesser degree. In the early days, the groups may have also performed the *son corrido*, which is a variant of *son* from the rural tobacco-growing Western region of Vueltabajo, which also contained elements of competitive improvisation between singers (Pérez 1986). Thus, it is evident that the tonada trinitaria was a transcultural product not only of

¹¹ *Columbia* is a musical style first cultivated by cane-cutters in Matanzas province. It is one of the three main styles of the urban rumba associated with Matanzas and Havana, the other two being *yambú* and *guaguancó*.

African- and Spanish-derived musics, but of local musical cultures native to other areas of Cuba.

The tonada trinitaria followed much the same historical path as Trinidad: economic downturns led to isolation and preservation, later opening up to tourism. During the time the tonada trinitaria crystallized, the economic landscape of Trinidad was changing. The sugar plantation owners began to migrate in the 1840s and 1850s from the Valle de los Ingenios to neighboring Cienfuegos, which was developing at the time. Trinidad had reached its economic peak in the early 1840s, less than a century after large-scale sugar plantations appeared in its valley. Yet the ensuing crisis left the town decrepit after only a few years. A huge outflow of capital and population followed the collapse of sugar in Trinidad. The city's momentum slowed and much remained frozen in time, hence the famous colonial architecture and cobblestone streets. Trinidad was very late in being connected to developing railroads and highways that linked the rest of Cuba in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This contributed to the isolation, localization, and preservation of the town's cultural traditions, such as the tonada trinitaria. Factors such as the 1959 Revolution, and the renewal of tourism in the 1980s greatly impacted Trinidad and the tonada trinitaria. The origins of the tonada trinitaria cannot be neatly packaged and presented. As with other musical genres and oral traditions originating in marginalized populations, a finite beginning cannot always be established. Given the historical documents available and the theses of Cuban scholars, however, the tonada trinitaria can be not only described, but compared to similar, better-documented Afro-Cuban genres. We can agree as to the area of origin, the general dates, and the various cultural groups whose influence marked the tradition.

Yet the complete story behind the origin of the tonada trinitaria – if there exists a single “true” story at all – may be lost to history forever, dying with the slaves and free blacks who first performed their tangos in colonial Trinidad.

After having examined the evolution of the tonada trinitarias, let us now turn to the musical characteristics. This includes tracing the ethnic origins of the genre and linking this to the instruments and their use, and taking into account the harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and spatial elements which compose the overall musical organization of the tonadas.

CHAPTER 3 THE MUSICAL SIDE

The tonada trinitaria shares features of African and Spanish musical heritage, yet is a unique creole creation specific to Trinidad de Cuba. The musical organization occurs across rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and spatial elements. The rhythmic element is based primarily in the percussion instruments, while the melodic and harmonic aspects include the voices of the guía and the chorus. The spatial element encompasses the performance arena of the tonadas.

Fernando Ortiz and Afro-Cuban Music

In analyzing the musical organization of the tonada trinitaria, it is wise to refer to the writings of Fernando Ortiz. In chapter five of his work *La africanía de la música folklórica cubana* ([1950] 2001), Ortiz explores the instrumental and choral music of Afro-Cubans. He begins by explaining the concept behind uniting the voice (our primordial instrument) with other instruments. Song is an intense form of human expression, and the addition of instruments serves to further the intensity. In Afro-Cuban religious musics such as palo (of congo extraction), the use of voice and instruments together is critical, as it intensifies the magical or spiritual effect. In the majority of Afro-Cuban expressions, the use of song and percussion is central, often, but not always, in addition to dance. The employment of percussion instruments in Afro-Cuban music is attributed to the high value placed on these in the religious traditions of the Africans who were brought to Cuba; these “stronger” percussion instruments held more magical value than string or wind instruments according to Ortiz. While it is stereotypical to see West African music as purely percussive, the centrality of drumming and rhythm is clear. The re-creation of West African religious traditions in

Cuba is closely tied to Afro-Cuban music and its instruments. Yet we must also remember that African and Cuban-born slaves had only limited resources at their disposal. When it came to making music, a wall or door often sufficed for instrumental accompaniment. When it came to re-creating drums, the Africans called on their memory and used what was at hand in their new environment. Further, slaves born in Cuba would have been exposed to multiple African cultural traditions. This was the case with Esteban Montejo, a slave turned *cimarrón* (maroon), who could describe the characteristics and beliefs of the African elders, distinguishing between the *lucumí* and *congós*, for example (Barnet 1976).

The majority of the religious and secular musics of Afro-Cuban origin can be described as composed of a number of musical planes. In the vocal plane, one singer leads the songs and is often responded to by a chorus (antiphonal). The rhythmic plane is complex, operating with a stable reference or “clave” which is supported by minor percussion and drums, weaving a repeating cell which is complemented by a drum that elaborates upon this base. This drum “speaks” and often complements the singer and follows the movements of dancers; it is often termed “quinto” or “*caja*” and is usually either the highest or lowest in pitch of the drums.

African-Derived Elements in the Tonadas

The clearest influence of African music in the *tonadas trinitarias* is found in the rhythmic plane. The drums are of congo-carabalí influence, derived from the *yuka* drum of the Cabildo de San Antonio de Congos Reales. The hoe blade, or *campana*, is used in many Afro-Cuban musical forms, such as *palo*, *bembé*, and *columbia*, and may be derived from the practices of the Cabildo de San Antonio. However, on María Teresa Linares’s recordings of the music of the *cabildo* (recorded in 1984), no metal strikers are

used (2006). The hoe blade may have been used in other manifestations tied to the cabildo or simply drawn from other Afro-Cuban practices in or around Trinidad. The use of a set of three drums can be attributed to the fact that this a standard in Afro-Cuban music. Although the Cabildo de San Antonio only uses the single yuka drum, the use of three drums is seen in musical ensembles of batá, palo, rumba, and yuka. If Patricio Gascón “brought back drums” from the war experience of 1868, as some believe, this may very well have been from exposure to other Afro-Cuban drummers abroad. The güiro is without a doubt an influence from Cuban peasant music, having originated with the Cuban aboriginal population. These instruments conform to a rhythmic plane often found in Afro-Cuban music based on skin, metal, wood, and shaker or scraper. The following chart compares the tonadas trinitarias to similar manifestations.

Table 3-1. Comparison of instrumental and vocal parts in Afro-Cuban musics.

		PALO	YUKA	ABAKUA	RUMBA	TON. TRIN.
SKIN	LOW DRUM	Caja*	Caja*	Bonkó-enchemiyá*	Salidor	Bombo
	MID DRUM	Mula	Mula	Obí-apá	Tres-golpes	Un solo golpe
	HIGH DRUM	Cachimbo	Cachimbo	Kuchí-yeremá, Solo golpe/Biankomé	Quinto*	Quinto*
WOOD		Catá	Catá	Itones	Catá/Clave	
METAL		Guataca**		Ekón		Campana
SHELL	SHAKER	Nkembi***	Nkembi	Erikundi	Chékere	Güiro
VOICE		Gallo	Gallo	Moruá Yuansa	Guía	Guía
CHORUS		Coro	Coro	Coro	Coro	Coro

*Functions as the improvisational drum.

**The guataca is the same instrument as the tonada’s campana; both are hoe blades.

***The nkembi are gourd rattles worn on the wrists of the caja player.

As can be inferred by the chart, the tonada trinitaria most closely resembles the instrumental characteristics of rumba. While palo, yuka, and abakuá traditions are tied

more closely to specific African ethnic origins, the tonadas and the rumba are “newer” creole creations and exhibit the highest level of Spanish influence in the group. The palo and yuka were tied to dances and songs brought by congo slaves, and the abakuá trace their roots back to a secret society of the Calabar. In contrast, both rumba and the tonada trinitaria were created by Cubans, drawing on the mulatto cultural mixture taking place in nineteenth-century Cuba. The names of the drums are Spanish in origin, as is the name of the hoe blade. The güiro is the term used in Cuba for the gourd scraper of aboriginal origin. Furthermore, the improvisational drums in rumba and the tonadas are found in the highest register. This is characteristic of European music; the improvisational or lead instrument is found in the high register, while in West African and Afro-Cuban religious musics the lowest drum is usually that which “speaks.”

Rhythmic Characteristics¹²

The rhythm in these Afro-Cuban musical forms is organized around a repeating pattern, usually referred to by Cubans as the “clave.” In rumba, the clave is based on a five-note pattern played by the instrument of the same name. This central rhythmic cell, however, is often performed on a clearly audible metal object, such as a hoe blade or cowbell. This is the case in palo, bembé, columbia, and the tonada trinitaria. These four genres all employ the same musical pattern, often referred to as the 6/8 clave or West African clave (see Figure 3-1).

Unlike the pattern played in palo, bembé, and columbia, which are squarely in 6/8, the campana pattern of the tonadas is not very strict. By this I mean that in practice the

¹² This analysis is based on my fieldwork carried out in 2009 with both retired elder musicians and younger musicians of the Conjunto Folklórico de Trinidad.

pattern does not evenly fall into the 6/8 rhythm of Figure 3-1; rather, the “feel” falls somewhere between 6/8 and 2/4 (Figure 3-2). Rhythmic characteristics exhibiting a flexibility or ambiguity falling between what in Western music is conceptualized as triple (for example 6/8 time) and duple (for example 2/4 time) is very common in Afro-Cuban drumming, such as in batá, palo, and abakuá traditions.



Figure 3-1. 6/8 bell pattern.



Figure 3-2. Bell pattern in 2/4 time.

Of course, the exact “feel” depends on the player as well. Elder tonaderos, who experienced the tradition in its original context (nocturnal street transits) differed widely in their interpretations from younger musicians who performed the tonadas. From the 1960s on, the tonadas had only existed within a folkloric context, withdrawn from its original activities and placed on stage. Furthermore, only a single state-sponsored tonada group existed (made up of experienced “elder” tonaderos who had experienced the living tradition previous to the Revolution). Outside of this, the tonadas were also performed by folkloric troupes in Trinidad, one of which was the Conjunto Folklórico de Trinidad. The state-sponsored tonada group ceased to exist in the 1990s; following this, the Conjunto Folklórico was the only remaining performer of tonadas, and is now

made up exclusively of younger musicians who are less experienced with the tonada tradition.

In terms of rhythmic interpretation, the surviving elder players (who are now retired from active participation in performance of the tonadas) like Joseíto Lares, play “in between” the 6/8 and 2/4 time feel. Younger players in the Conjunto Folklórico, however, who were not involved in the tonadas except as part of this folkloric context, tend to play the pattern more squarely in 6/8. Interestingly, the same effect is seen in the güiro pattern.

Elder players such as Gregorio Valdía play a pattern which has a specific feel to it, emphasizing the downbeat and giving little attention to the inner notes. The following example is Gregorio’s interpretation of the güiro, who was part of the town’s state-sponsored tonada group prior to the 1990s.

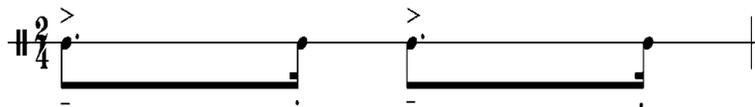


Figure 3-3. Güiro pattern as played by Gregorio. (Dashes indicate long scrapes; dots indicate short scrapes).

In contrast, I learned a much “squarer” pattern from the younger drummers of the Conjunto Folklórico, which emphasizes the time in a different manner. They described the güiro pattern as being the same as that played by popular bands in Cuba.

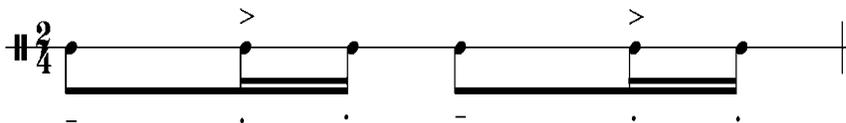


Figure 3-4. Güiro pattern as played by members of the Conjunto Folklórico.

The patterns played by the drums work in a manner sensitive to the singers. When the guía is singing, they play slightly softer, complementing the solo voice with slight emphases added during his melodic line in the way of accents or “punches.” These punches often occur in the bombo during a resting point in the melody, and take place on the “and” of beat two and perhaps the first beat (the second and first beats of the campana pattern, respectively). The bombo, although primarily based on a repeating two-bar figure, plays an important role in embellishing the tonada in addition to the quinto. The punches it provides serve to inspire the singers and drummers alike. These punches also occur during the chorus responses.



Figure 3-5. Bombo pattern as played by Claro. (Dots indicate a dry sound; o under a note indicates an open tone).

As with the other patterns, the drums are played differently by the less experienced members of the Conjunto Folklórico. As with the güiro and campana patterns, the drum patterns are often more “square” or rigid than those performed by Claro Valdespino and other elder drummers. Claro and the elder drummers seem to have a “touch” or finesse that is missing with the drummers of the Conjunto Folklórico. This may be due not only to less experience but less internalization: less applied effort and enjoyment in their interpretations. When I recorded the elder drummers performing in 2009, they were visibly engaged with each other and were thoroughly enjoying the

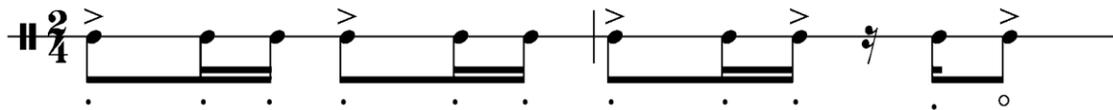


Figure 3-6. Bombo pattern as played by Bernardo.

experience. On the other hand, the Conjunto Folklórico performs the same stock tonadas many times a day for small groups of tourists, primarily seeking economic gain. In my percussion lesson with Bernardo Lara, a drummer of the Conjunto Folklórico, the bombo pattern was similar to Claro's, yet seemed to lack the punches and subtle embellishments present in Claro's performance (Figure 3-6). The following bombo pattern strays even further from Claro's style; it was demonstrated to me by Nelson, a young drummer of the Conjunto Folklórico.

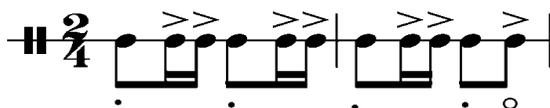


Figure 3-7. Bombo pattern as played by Nelson.

The un solo golpe (middle drum) is the only drum which maintains a constant and unchanging pattern (Figure 3-8). The sole difference I observed between the drummers of the Conjunto Folklórico and the group of elders – with whom Carpio played the un solo golpe – was the placement of the left (or less-dominant) hand. Whereas Bernardo's left hand was placed fully on the drumhead for muffling (palm down), Carpio only used his closed fingers for this effect, positioning his hand in the same manner as for an open tone (fingers closed and top of palm lining up with the border of the drum).

The quinto, being the most conversational or improvisatory drum, is performed subjectively by different drummers, conforming to an overall rule of loud versus soft.

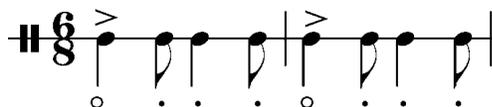


Figure 3-8. Un solo golpe pattern.

The loud versus soft was the primary element I learned during my lesson with Bernardo, and was emphasized by many of the musicians I spoke with. When the guía sings, the quinto player uses his fingers to play open tones on the border of the drum, sparsely complementing his text. When the chorus enters, the quinto player uses his full hand – more or less in the manner of a conga player – and improvises more aggressively and loudly over the text. Arnaldo Fonseca, a much-respected elder tonadero, told me “the quinto should be soft; the bombo is the one who should inspire [the quinto]” (Fonseca and Carpio Quezada 2009).

This loud to soft in the guía’s versus the chorus’s text is generally felt in the percussive ensemble as a whole. When the guía sings, it is as if the instruments subside and everyone listens to what he has to say. When the chorus enters it is as if the ensemble turns up the volume and energy, with everyone participating in the chorus text. This is like a holding of the breath followed by an energetic release. This control of dynamics was necessary not only because of a lack of microphones in the street transits, but also in order to avoid “stepping on” the voice. The same phenomenon is observed in rumba. When the text of the song is performed by the lead singer, the quinto must not “step on” the singer’s text, but rather strive to complement it appropriately. During the chorus’s call-and-response in the montuno, the energy increases and the quinto asserts itself.

Vocal Characteristics

The organization of the singers corresponds to the voices. The *guía* is the lead solo voice, and the chorus is composed of *prima* (first), *segunda* (second), and *falsete* (falsetto). The *guía*'s function is to improvise on the primary theme of the chorus, referred to as *inspirando* (inspiring). The same reference to *inspiración* (inspiration) is made in rumba in reference to the lead singer's improvisations. Another similarity to rumba is the use of two or three vocal lines in the chorus. In rumba groups this depends on the number of chorus singers; if there are women they will usually sing the high octave, corresponding to the *falsete* of the *tonadas*. However, in a full *tonada* group, according to the elder musicians, the presence of all three vocal lines is necessary. The basic melodic line, introduced by the *guía*, is the *prima*. This voice can be sung by males and females. The *segunda*, sung a third under the *prima*, is usually performed by males, being the lowest voice. The *falsete* is the realm of the highest female voices. This is performed an octave above the *prima*. This harmonic organization of the three chorus voices is identical to that of the *coros de clave*. Both of these genres drew on the tradition of Spanish choral groups, which were organized in much the same manner, being based on third and sixth harmonies and being composed of *prima*, *segunda*, and *falsete*.

The vocal quality is similar to rumba and many other Afro-Cuban song genres: clear and clean, with a slight nasal quality reminiscent of both West African and Andalusian or Canary Islander singing styles. Hence this quality is inherited not from a tradition of high European art, but from the influence of Afro-Cuban religious music (such as that of the *Cabildo de San Antonio*) and *música campesina*.

The melodic contour and harmony of the tonadas trinitarias is what seems to draw most on the influence of música campesina. The melody of the guía's inspiración varies little; it ascribes to a "stock" melody. The same phenomenon is observed in the tonadas campesinas, where lead singers focus on improvising text, while conforming to a pre-set melodic line with little variation. In both forms, the melodic contour rises in the beginning and middle of the inspiración, with a descending line marking the end. The beginning and middle sections may be repeated in the tonadas campesinas until the singer is ready to finish, and this is signaled by a descent to the dominant, which is held for a few seconds. In the tonadas trinitarias, the melodic contour tends to be more strictly adhered to in the inspiraciones. The first section (A) of the inspiración is always repeated twice, followed by a second section (B) which connects to the final descending line (C), similar to décimas sung in rumba. This formula is rarely altered, although on a few occasions I noticed Arnaldo repeating the B section before connecting to the final descent. Yet we must not categorize the tonadas campesinas as more "flexible" in their repetitions than the tonadas trinitarias. In fact, two main types of tonadas campesinas exist: tonadas de punto fijo (tonadas with fixed accompaniment) and tonadas de punto libre (tonadas with free accompaniment). In the first type, a fixed rhythm and harmonic structure accompanies the singer, to which he must conform. In the second type, the rhythm is "freer," and the musical accompaniment follows the singer's melodic contour, in which he can move between the A and B sections, repeating as he pleases (see Table 3-2).

While punto libre is more common in the western provinces, such as Pinar del Río, the punto fijo dominates the center part of the island, to which Trinidad corresponds.

Since the punto fijo style limited the flexibility of repeats and encourages the singers to stay within rhythmic and harmonic boundaries, the tonadas trinitarias drew on this element as an influence. Furthermore, the fact that a repeating rhythmic cell comprises the reference point (as in most Afro-Cuban musics), the singing generally corresponds to staying within the rhythmic boundaries. Thus, in rumba, the singer and chorus rely on the five notes of the clave to define entrances and length of notes. On the contrary, if they do not adhere to the reference of the clave, they are said to be “off” or “crossed.” In the same way, the tonadas trinitarias are based around the seven-note pattern played on the campana. Each chorus has a certain point of entry based on this reference, yet the lead singer always enters on the second beat of the campana,

Table 3-2. Comparison of the structure of inspiraciones in Cuban musics.

<u>Inspiraciones</u>			
Tonadas trinitarias			
A	A	B(x)*	C
Punto fijo			
A(x)	B(x)	C	
Punto libre			
A(x)	B(x)	C	
Rumba (décima)			
A	A	B	C

*(x) represents flexibility of repetition, yet always in the order A, B, and ending with C. In the tonadas trinitarias the B is only repeated rarely.

17

- o-ir el gui - ro y la to - na o-ir el gui - ro

17

23

y la to - na o ye es-e hie - rro mu-la - ta com - o sue - na

23

28

ya tu ves

28

Figure 3-9. Continued

syllables by the guía as well as the exclusive use of major modes. The “le lo lai” singing is common in Cuban country music, and is rooted in the influences of Canary Islanders in Cuba. On the few existing recordings of the tonadas trinitarias, recorded by the Conjunto Folklórico and the folkloric group Cocoró, the “le lo lai” is not present. The

only person who uses this at times is Puchi (Efraín Zayas Escobar), the present lead singer of the Conjunto Folklórico, and he admits to copying this from Arnaldo. Puchi, who is much younger than Arnaldo, explains this as Arnaldo's style, although this could be because he is one of the few surviving singers of the older tonada groups. It is unlikely that Arnaldo simply invented this; he must have heard this element used by other tonaderos. Puchi's generation was not exposed to the earlier tradition of tonadas, during which there was a much larger community of tonada musicians. He himself admits that he does not have the same "touch" to the "le lo lai" as Arnaldo. This is an element which may have been more common of earlier eras, or perhaps a characteristic of a certain early singer.

The guía's inspiraciones revolve around a few basic themes. Arnaldo described how the element of improvisation has been lost (Fonseca and Carpio Quezada 2009). This element was present in the first and second eras¹³ when the tonada groups of the barrios were active. It was the interaction of these groups in their meetings or competitions which spurred the need for textual creativity. The ability of the group's guía was demonstrated in this way; his inspiraciones were judged on how creative and witty they were, while also addressing the theme of the tonada. The lack of competition in the third era due to the absence of multiple groups has resulted in the limiting of textual improvisation. Furthermore, in the Conjunto Folklórico, the tonadas trinitarias are performed as part of a show for economic gain. There is no need to develop witty

¹³ As previously mentioned, Joseíto Lares (2009) described the history of the tonadas by way of three eras, which I will describe in depth in Chapter 4. During these first two eras the tradition was a living one: it was performed within its original context and was cultivated voluntarily by different tonada groups of the barrios of Trinidad. Following this, in the third era, the tonadas became confined to the realm of folkloric performance, preserved by the state through sponsorship of a single tonada group as well as folkloric groups specializing in Afro-Cuban musical traditions.

improvisations; there is no opposing group or guía to address. Now there are only foreign tourists who may have no idea what is being said. The end result has been the repetition of stock phrases by the guía, many of which can be used regardless of the theme of the tonada itself.

Both Puchi and Arnaldo, the two singers whom I interviewed and recorded, displayed this tendency. Puchi's experiences have been mostly confined to the Conjunto Folklórico, and so he had no reason to develop the aspect of textual improvisation. Arnaldo had experienced the tonadas in their original context in the second era of the tonadas (1900s-1950s) as a young man, but this was six decades ago! The majority of his experiences fell within the third era (1960s-present), when only one tonada group existed and later disappeared. Thus both his and Puchi's inspiraciones are composed primarily of stock phrases.

The guía usually interjects with a rising "O é," "Eh" or "Cómo es," of which the syllable ("eh") is extended until the inspiración begins, which always occurs on the second beat of the campana's pattern.

Cómo es.....
O lo lo, o lo lo, o lo lei la
O lo lo lo lo lo lo lo lo lei la....

O é
Oye la rumba y la toná
Oye la rumba y la toná
Oye ese quinto caramba qué bueno está ya ves....

[O é
Hear the rumba and the tonada
Hear the rumba and the tonada
Listen to how good that quinto sounds...]

O é
O lo lo, o lo lo, o lo lei la

Negra buena, ven pa'cá
Con sentimiento del alma oye la toná y ya verás....

[O é
O lo lo, o lo lo, o lo lei la
Good black woman, come here
Listen to the tonada, feeling it in your soul, and you'll see....]

The guía can also, although rarely, simply repeat the tonada as it is sung by the chorus. Some stock phrases are linked to a certain tonada. For example, when singing the tonada

No llores, no llores María
No llores, no llores por Diós
Que los sentimientos del alma querida
Ay porque así, ay porque así lo manda Diós

[Don't cry, don't cry María
Don't cry, don't cry for God's sake
Because [of] the emotions of a beloved heart
Because that is, because that is what God orders]

One of the stock inspiraciones for this tonada is:

Eh....
Adiós María, no hay novedad
Adiós María, no hay novedad
Con sentimiento del alma y de madrugá ya verás...

[Eh....
Goodbye María, there is nothing new
Goodbye María, there is nothing new
With feeling in your soul and in the early morning, you'll see....]

Here, the inspiración does not always make perfect sense. The line “adiós María” addresses the woman in the tonada, but the last line “con sentimiento” is merely an addition of a general stock phrase. The early morning reference refers to the time when the tonadas were usually performed: through the night and into the wee hours of the morning. The “sentimiento” refers to the deep feelings expressed by the tonada musicians. Thus whole inspiraciones can be generalized stock phrases which belong to

the tonadas (for example, “listen to the quinto,” or “good black woman come over here”). These can be employed with any tonada – whatever theme it may contain. The María example shows that phrases that pertain to the theme of a particular tonada can be inserted and then combined with a section of a stock phrase. Therefore the inspiraciones are not truly improvised in the sense that the guía “invents” a witty, original text on the spot. Rather, both Puchi and Arnaldo pull phrases from a memory pool and recite or recombine these in the style which they associate with the tonadas trinitarias. The melody of the inspiración is preconceived; the guía needs only to fill in the text. This leads us to conclude that if the inspiraciones of the guías of the first and second eras were indeed truly improvised as the elder musicians claim, then the third era has seen a shift from a textual to a musical focus for the guía. If this is the case, then the role of the guía is no longer as central to the tonadas as in previous eras.

Folkloricization

Thus in the third era, following the Revolution, there has been a shift towards a focus on the tradition as a presentational performance event. This is folkloricization, the process of making folklore folkloric (Hagedorn 2001, 12). Folklore, which in Cuba generally designates Afro-Cuban folklore, is performed in a folkloric way. In other words, this is folklore withdrawn from its original context, usually transferred to staged performances. The tonadas, thus, were withdrawn from their original context (nocturnal street transits) surviving only in cultural festivals and other avenues for folkloric performance. They were now performed for the sake of listening rather than functional participation. Once they extracted from their street-level context and put on a stage in front of a sit-down audience, their function was drastically altered. The tonadas became a sort of cultural object which was to be appreciated and observed as a static

presentational performance event rather than a spontaneous popular expression which was voluntarily cultivated and participated in by the masses. The tonada group sponsored by the Ministry of Culture in the third era grew out of a need to rescue and preserve, imposed from above. The need from below (the barrios), based on entertainment and enjoyment, was no longer present. Granted, this is not to say that the musicians and fans of the tonadas no longer enjoyed the music, yet it was clearly no longer necessary for them. It is not likely that the tonada group of the third era would have remained active had it not been for the Ministry of Culture. Although the genre was greatly altered by the interference of the Ministry of Culture, we must appreciate the fact that their efforts helped propel the tradition into the twenty-first century. The following chapter will incorporate contemporary discourses about the tonada by local culture bearers and ethnographic description, serving to map the evolution of the tonadas trinitarias.

CHAPTER 4 EVOLUTION OF THE TONADAS TRINITARIAS

Arnaldo Fonseca: An Elder Tonadero

Arnaldo Fonseca is 79 years old and spends most of his time taking care of his wife. Known as “el carnicero” (the butcher) by his friends, he owned a meat shop in the past, now run by his son. He is considered among the most knowledgeable elders of the tonadas. All of the musicians I interviewed venerated him as the most talented (remaining) singer of the tonadas trinitarias; they encouraged me to interview him and record his singing. He is treated as the bearer of the “real” tonada tradition of the past, something that was being lost. Through the younger generation’s description, they seemed to admit that they were not only less experienced, but less knowledgeable and less “authentic.” Clearly, the younger generation viewed the retired elders as the authorities. Not only is Arnaldo one of the elder tonaderos, but he stands out because of his skin color. He was also the only white tonada musician I was aware of in my 2009 trip to Trinidad. For this reason, I would like to briefly discuss the theme of race in relation to the tonada tradition.

Race and the Tonadas in Trinidad

The prevalence of blacks and the low numbers of white participants in the tonadas were due to a number of factors, which reflect the historical condition of the tonadas. Not only was the tradition first cultivated by blacks, but it crystallized in the marginal neighborhoods of Trinidad, whose demographics were and are primarily black. Furthermore, the musical characteristics are clearly Afro-Cuban, and the Cabildo de San Antonio de Congos Reales was highly influential in its development. As such, the tonaderos themselves can be estimated at about 90% black or mulatto, with few whites

participating. This same phenomenon is observable in other non-religious Afro-Cuban musical manifestations with roots in the barrios. The same holds true in rumba, for example. The majority of rumberos are black or mulatto, with a far fewer number of white participants. Carnival music is also still dominated by blacks. All of these manifestations were first created and performed by Africans and their descendents in colonial Cuba. As opposed to the non-Spanish speaking Caribbean, Cuban society was racially divided into two main groups – black and white – rather than three – black, mulatto and white (Helg 1995).

In both Cuba and Puerto Rico whites were both the holders of power and numerically superior. Racial ideology of the nineteenth century identified whites as the superior race, with characteristics lesser races should aspire to. José Antonio Saco, a prominent intellectual of the 1830s and a spokesperson of the white middle class, proposed encouraging European immigration to Cuba, envisioning Cuba as a white Hispanic nation. He did not consider blacks as part of an independent Cuban nation (Moore 1997, 17). Blacks were seen as biologically and culturally inferior; their music and customs were generally regarded as unrefined and barbaric. Hence, when the tonadas trinitarias, the rumba and other Afro-Cuban genres developed, few whites participated. Many traditions had roots in the slave barracks, and while white masters and overseers were familiar with some of the slaves' traditions, it was socially unacceptable for them to participate. When the tonada and the rumba crystallized in the urban barrios, they were extensions of the traditions of the slave barracks. In this new, freer environment, in which previously freed blacks and ex-slaves lived in close quarters with poor white Cubans and working-class Spanish immigrants, the Afro-

Cubans dominated the music-making. Furthermore, at this time the occupation of musician was looked down upon by white society and prized as an avenue of upward mobility by blacks. While poor white Cubans in the barrios began to participate in the dominant music of their social space, performed in shared public arenas by their black and mulatto neighbors, whites of the middle class saw this as *cosa de negros* (things of the blacks). This racist view still exists even today among many Cubans and designates black traditions to the low realms of uncultured, unrefined, inferior expressions. Yet this snubbing of Afro-Cuban traditions was perhaps strongest in Cuba's colonial and republican eras, during the development of these musics. The fact that there were fewer whites in the barrios, the presence of racism and contempt for black traditions, and the disdain for musicianship were all factors in determining the low numbers of white participants in the tonada trinitaria. Understanding this, let us return to Arnaldo's story.

Arnaldo's Account

I met Arnaldo the previous year through Enrique Zayas, heard him sing a couple of tonadas, and expressed my interest in returning the following year to learn more. In 2009, when I returned to Trinidad, I learned that Arnaldo's wife had fallen ill and that Arnaldo dedicated the majority of his day to her. Hence, Carpio (Pedro Carpio Quezada), my primary informant and coordinator, warned me that we did not want to impose too much or expect too much from him. Carpio knew Arnaldo personally, as he was himself a tonada musician. We made it a point to stop by his home and politely ask for some time to speak with him. Arnaldo always became animated when speaking about the fandango, which was the name he used to refer to the tradition. When he

recounted his stories, he was full of emotion; his singing exposed a deep joy he felt for this part of his life.

Arnaldo was introduced to the fandango through his father, who used to bring him on the *recorridos* (transits through the streets) of the group. His father was a fandanguero, although it does not seem as if he was a musician, but rather a follower. From an early age, his father would take him by the hand to accompany the fandango¹⁴ of the Barranca. The Barranca is the name of Arnaldo's native barrio; it was with this group that Arnaldo developed his art and performed.

If Arnaldo's father had taken him by the hand, this means that he was only a child when he began being exposed to the fandangos, as he referred to the music and the groups. As Arnaldo was 79 when I interviewed him, this means he would have been born around 1930. Therefore his first experiences may have occurred with the tradition as it was in the late 1930s. In his teenage years in the 1940s he would have begun musical participation of his own accord. Indeed, many of his personal stories are from *los cuarenta y pico* (the "forty-somethings").

The fandango (group) of the Barranca at the time of Arnaldo's early experiences was headed by Alfonso Puig, a respected bombo-player and guía. This would have been in the late 1930s and the 1940s. Arnaldo listed the names of other fandangueros of the time: Pepe Entenza, Félix Puig (Alfonso's older brother), Felipe Pelangallo, Cheo's father, Los Suárez (the Suárez family), Los Gutiérrez, los Diablitos. The family members tended to be the brothers and fathers. Any women referenced were accorded an individual rather than a family connection; all of those mentioned were seen as

¹⁴ The terms *fandango* and *tonada* also refer to the musical groups that performed this music or to the event itself (*un fandango*).

outstanding as chorus singers. No women guías or drummers were mentioned – nor did I see any in the present.



Figure 4-1. Arnaldo Fonseca and Pedro Carpio Quezada. 26 June 2009.

The gender roles here are clearly divided – men lead and dominate the primary roles and women are recognized only if they add a beautiful voice to the chorus. Men, on the other hand are remembered if they stand out as great drummers or guías – not as chorus singers. Specifically, as drummers, only the bombo or quinto is afforded the opportunity to show outstanding skill. I never heard them mention a great guiro-player, campana-player or even an outstanding un solo golpe. This is not to say that some may have played better than others, yet the quinto and bombo are the instruments which improvise. They are capable of “adding flavor” or imparting a certain touch to the music. The other instruments maintain the same patterns with little-to-no deviation. This quality-rating is a central component of the fandango and is what Arnaldo seemed

to focus on while differentiating the elder musicians' way of playing from the younger generations.

Arnaldo describes his early experiences as such: "my father would take me by the hand and he'd go to the fandangos from here from the Barranca, and we would get to the Simpá [barrio] . . . and so we'd get to the Simpá by surprise" (Fonseca and Carpio Quezada 2009). This is the central theme of Arnaldo's time: nocturnal transits where one group from one barrio went to "surprise" another barrio with an unannounced visit. Along the way they would stop at the homes of the "fans" of the tonadas. The fandango went on all night, the group making its way through the streets of the town.

These types of fandangos were unplanned events; they were spontaneous. "Before, the groups would go out for fun" – simply because people loved it. "They'd say 'hey, tonight the fandango is going to go out from Alfonso's [Puig] house,' and everyone would go to Alfonso's house here in the Barranca. There they formed the group, *tarareaban* [sang] one or two tonadas to get inspired, and then they'd go out" (Fonseca and Carpio Quezada 2009). In essence, these neighborhood musical groups would simply decide to get together that night or a date in the near future to meet and play. A core group was all that was needed to do this: enough persons to cover the five percussion parts and some singers. They would then set a meeting place, which was usually the house of one of the primary musicians. For example, Arnaldo points out that they would often meet at Alfonso Puig's home, because he was the main organizer of the Barranca's group: the unofficial director. Another organizer was Pepe Entenza, a well-known guía who also "had a tonada," (had his own group). Likewise Alfonso Puig had his fandango. It seems that these organizers also owned the instruments – some

were drum-makers themselves. Hence, it made sense to meet where the group's instruments were housed.

After warming up with a few tonadas, the group would take to the streets to start visiting homes. This would start at night, as early as eight o'clock, but often later. Once in the streets, the fandangueros would sing tonadas as they proceeded to their stopping points. In order to better comprehend these processions, it is necessary to understand the layout of Trinidad. In these neighborhoods, all the houses along the sides of the cobblestone streets are connected, separated only by walls of cement. Windows, doors, and balconies look to the street, which is a social arena for everyday life. When the fandangos transited through these streets, people would have easily heard the music through their windows or front doors, which separated them only minimally from the social veins of the city: the streets. As the fandango passed through the streets anyone could join the throng of revelers, singing and dancing behind the drummers and guía, who were usually the leaders. Thus, the group grew as it moved, sometimes reaching forty or fifty followers. This is comparable to carnival time in Trinidad (and other cities in Cuba) where the multitudes often fall in behind the *comparsas* (carnival groups), singing and dancing as they follow the group through the streets.

When Arnaldo speaks of stopping at the homes of tonada "fans," he refers simply to enthusiasts of the music. Often, these were musicians themselves, singers or drummers who the group wanted to "pick up" along the way. For example, when Arnaldo was very young, the fandango would often stop at Juan Prose's home. Prose, a drummer of the tonadas, led a hard life according to Arnaldo: he was very poor and lived in a decrepit house near the outskirts of Trinidad. Arnaldo proudly confessed that

he was the only one who could get Prose out of the house to join them. Arnaldo also apparently was slightly better off than many of the musicians (he was also one of the few whites) and would help out Prose at times. He was also the one to contribute money for some of the liquor which served as a stimulus to the musicians as they proceeded. Arnaldo recounts an example of how he would get Prose to join them. Once, he arrived at Prose's home at around one o'clock, knocked, and ask Prose's wife to tell him Arnaldo wanted to speak with him. Arnaldo then told Prose that he wanted him to come *rumbear* (play/have fun) with them for a while. After a little coaxing, Prose got dressed and joined them. The group would then proceed to the next house on their route. Upon my questioning, Arnaldo provided a hypothetical example. "[Let's say] we would go throughout the town singing, then we would get to Carpio's [Carpio was present with us in the room] house and there we would lay it down even stronger and do three or four tonadas and then move on." There was also a certain etiquette observed by those whom the fandangueros visited.

What happened is that you'd get to a house and they would be sleeping and everyone would wake up . . . they would open their doors and they had to give you a bottle of rum. . . In the tonadas when they'd start it was with the tonadas [themselves] and after four songs everyone would be reaching for the bottle . . . and so you would get to any house and immediately they would give you the bottle – but we didn't go with the intent that they would give us anything, rather it was to give them a great surprise. (Fonseca and Carpio Quezada 2009)

After enjoying a few songs at that point, the receivers of the friendly serenade would then usually join the group as they proceeded to their next stop on the route.

Not all the stopping points were musicians' homes. The fandangos also visited friends or perhaps even a young woman who had caught one of the musician's eyes. For example, one night during the transit, Arnaldo decided he wanted to sing for this

beautiful *mulata*,¹⁵ the daughter of an acquaintance. He told the group “let’s go sing for her and see if she opens the windows.” They serenaded her – “*¡qué clase de serenata!*” (what a serenade!) – and were impressed when she came to the window to show her appreciation. This brings us to another descriptor used by Arnaldo: the tonada as a serenade.

Trinidad, just as the rest of Cuba, had a tradition of troubadours. Arnaldo mentioned the existence of these singer-songwriters in Trinidad when he was a young man. Troubadours in Cuba, called *trovadores*, sang to the accompaniment of guitar. Originating among the black working class of Santiago de Cuba, the repertoire was developed primarily in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The *trova* has much in common with the fandango. The tempo of both genres tends to be slow, the melodies are lyrical and sung in parallel harmonies of thirds and sixths. Furthermore the *trova* contains many songs with amorous themes, as do the tonadas. Both also contain patriotic themes, as both were developing alongside the Cuban wars of independence in the late nineteenth century (Orovio 2004, 214).

Arnaldo was among the youngest musicians during his early years in the fandango, which would have been in the 1940s. He remembers a certain occasion on which the fandango group came across a photographer – or simply someone with a camera – who took a picture of the full group – at five in the morning! This memory triggered Arnaldo’s excitement as he remarked “*¡qué clase de foto aquella!*” (what a photo that was!). There were around twenty to thirty people there, and “all the elders were there . . . and I was the ‘newest’ of all of them and I was dressed in a guayabera

¹⁵ *Mulata* refers to a light-skinned black girl, often of mixed black-white parentage.

and dress shoes . . . how beautiful [it was]! (Fonseca and Carpio Quezada 2009).”

Arnaldo even recounted the trajectory of the photo. There had been two copies, one of which belonged to him and was kept in his butcher shop. He had lent it out twice to other musician friends and later kept it framed in his living room. Unfortunately he had lost it at some point, perhaps lent to a friend. He greatly lamented this fact; he clearly associated the photo with memories of happier days.

This emotional attachment to the photo – which seems to have been the only one he had of the group of that time – reveals his feelings for fandangos. Throughout the interview, Arnaldo would grow very animated as he described stories and recalled songs. This contrasted greatly with his character when greeted at the door, as he was constantly under the pressure of caring for his sick wife at this time. These conversations surrounding the fandango seemed to provide an emotional outlet by serving to stimulate fond memories of his younger days. Cubans often display a number of framed photos in living rooms and bedrooms of family, close friends, and memorable occasions. For Arnaldo to treasure the photo in this way shows that this was an important part of his life. Ironically, the fandango in its past form has also disappeared; the loss of the photo is symbolic of the lost tradition of the fandango’s nocturnal transits.

Let us continue with Arnaldo’s story with the fandango of the 1940s. After meeting, warming up, and taking to the street to sing and visit homes, the group would arrive at the designated barrios. The exact place could be a central public area of the barrio or outside the home of the organizer of another fandango. The point was to dedicate this surprise musical event to that barrio. Multiple barrios could be visited; the

group often made its way through much of the town during the course of the night. Upon arrival to another barrio, the musicians and other enthusiasts of that neighborhood would come out to partake of the singing and show their appreciation for the group. This was a friendly musical gathering for the most part. For example, Arnaldo recalls his group from the Barranca would get to the Tamarindo barrio and all these young *negras* (black women) would come out and “outdo themselves [singing] tonadas” with his group. “No one would mess with them, and they would stay with us for the rest of the [transit through] town until dawn” (Fonseca and Carpio Quezada 2009). That no one messed with them implies that their singing voices were of such a quality that no one could touch them. Arnaldo’s group would then take up the task of back-tracking their transit through the town in order leave these young women in their neighborhoods. They could not be left to return home unaccompanied at that hour. This was part of the moral code of the time, which was also manifested in the interpretation of the tonadas.

Arnaldo described discipline, education (in terms of being well-mannered), and decency as aspects of the fandango of that time period – elements he believes are no longer present. Of course this ties in with the perception of change of the moral code in Cuba. In the early 1900s, it was still considered proper etiquette for young men to tip their hats to young women, in the same way that serenades were seen as a romantic way to show affection for a young lady. At the end of the night – or in the early morning – participants returned home and the drummers met back at the original house to leave the instruments before dispersing.

In the 1940s and previously, when the fandangos were visiting homes, different tonadas with varying themes were performed. The theme chosen depended on the

situation. For example, a serenade to a young woman would likely contain an amorous theme.

En una noche de plácida calma
El cielo imploraba por ti

[On a night of placid calm
The heavens pleaded for you]

Another tonada told Rosa how lovely she is:

Rosa qué linda eres,
Rosa qué linda eres tú,
Si tú me quieres como yo te quiero
Rosa ¡qué linda eres tú!

[Rosa, how beautiful you are,
Rosa, you are so beautiful,
[If] you love me as much as I love you
Rosa, how beautiful you are!]

Themes with satire or puya, as previously addressed, were also common. Joseíto (Lares 2009) describes how this worked as far as composition, using Gregorio (who was standing next to him) as an example:

I would compose a song about what I knew about Gregorio, or what I had found out about him – about what had happened to him – and I'd compose a tonada, and another person would do the same. And so what happened? Well, when two groups would play and start to sing these *tonadas de puya* . . . [they would end up fighting].

These types of meetings between groups occurred on street corners or other public areas, such as a central area of the barrio. Because of this violence, Joseíto's uncles would not let him take part in the tonadas until he was about sixteen years old, which would have been in about 1951.

Joseíto's Account

Anselmo "Joseíto" Lares is 74 years old and one of the elder tonaderos of Trinidad, along with Arnaldo. He has been a percussionist and chorus singer since he

began in the tonada tradition as a teenager. It seems he has always been a *clavero* (clave-player, or player of the *campanita*). His first experiences in the tonadas were with his uncles, whom he says were from the second era of the tonadas¹⁶ (early twentieth century). He and Arnaldo were involved in these groups during the same time period, beginning in the late 1940s for Arnaldo and about 1951 for Joseíto. His earliest first-hand experiences in the tonadas date from about 1948-1950, during which he knew about the groups' general activities. He was not allowed to participate in the actual transits, however, until he was sixteen years old (1951), due his uncles' prohibition.

This testifies to the theory that active participation in the tonada groups required a certain age of maturity. Joseíto's uncles prevented him from participation due to the dangers of violence. Only after he reached an age in which he surpassed the need for constant supervision was he allowed to participate. This holds true not only in the tonadas, but in many other Afro-Cuban musical traditions. The fact that these events are male-dominated, involve alcohol, violence, and at times, adult-themed song material, the participation of children is not widespread. Furthermore, the tonadas were performed during all-night transits, which likely had little or no presence of children. In Afro-Cuban drumming traditions, such as *batá* and *palo*, the musicians are primarily male and do not usually actively participate until adolescence or young adulthood. These drumming traditions are seen as *fuerte*, or strong, and unfit for females and children; they are the realm of men. The role of women and non-musicians is in singing chorus or dancing. Those who become drummers often enter the tradition through family connections and pass through a period of training and rites of passage. The

¹⁶ The different eras of the tonadas will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.

same seems to hold true for the tonadas trinitarias. Women are neither drummers nor lead singers; rather, they sing chorus and follow. Young men who become drummers or singers often had a family member or members who were musicians. As they reach a certain age of maturity, they begin to participate with consent of the older members. Following this, they gain experience and begin to learn the intricacies of the music by watching their elders, perhaps complemented by a short lesson here and there.

Arnaldo's case stands out, however. His first experience in the tonadas was as a child (how young is not clear), when his father would take him by the hand to accompany the fandangos. Arnaldo was the only musician that described participation as a child, yet interestingly, he was also the only one to deny violence as a part of group meetings. Rather, he describes the meetings as friendly encounters. This, however, runs contrary to the majority of historical and personal accounts I consulted. As far as his father taking him along as a child, this may have been because his father was not an active musical participant. Arnaldo neglected referring to his father as a singer or drummer; therefore he may have simply been an enthusiast – a follower. This means he would not have gotten caught up in violence as easily as the musicians themselves. On the other hand, the fact that he was taking his young son with him may have been an early way of initiating his way into adolescence, or manhood, and he was willing to assume the responsibility of his safety. Joséito's uncles, however, were *tocadores* (instrumentalists/drummers). Thus, as primary musicians, they would have been more preoccupied with playing, than chaperoning an underage nephew.

Hence, during his first experiences Joséito was confined to the pre-transit house jams. As described by both Joséito and Arnaldo, the fandango groups would meet at

one of the member's homes (often where the drums were kept) and warm up with some tonadas before taking to the streets. Joseíto's first experience as a participant took place one evening when his uncles called for him to come to the musicians' place of meeting. Two claveros (clave- or campana-players) were missing, and so they let him cover this part. He was not, however, allowed to accompany them on the transit. Thus began his first musical experiences in the tonadas: participating as a substitute clavero in the in-house warm ups. His family connection was the primary factor in allowing him the opportunity to participate, as was the case with Arnaldo. Both would have been familiar with the environment of the tonadas from an early age and had family connections which got them "in" with the musicians. This family connection is important not only because of the exposure it provided them at a young age, but because of the access it provided to learning this oral tradition. As in other Afro-Cuban folkloric traditions, not everyone has access to learning the parts, especially when it comes to drumming. Those who are not approved by musicians are not taught. Preliminary watching and imitating was a first step, but new musicians need to be corrected and shown the "correct" ways of interpretation, according to the more experienced musicians. One of the reasons behind the shifting practices and musical interpretations behind oral folkloric practices such as the tonadas trinitarias is the differing levels of communication and transmission from one generation to the next. For this reason, the history of the tonadas can be grouped into eras, each based on the interpretations of a generation and influenced by the dominant realities of life in Trinidad during the time.

The Three Eras

According to Joseíto (Lares 2009), the tonadas trinitarias have passed through three eras. These eras are primarily based on generations, and begin with the "fathers"

or *iniciadores* (initiators). They differ from each other on different levels, which result from the evolving political, economic, and cultural landscapes of Trinidad. In turn, this influenced generational changes in such things as interpretations and repertoire. Presently, the tonadas are no longer a “live” tradition practiced by local musicians; instead it has become frozen in time and placed on the stage for tourism or cultural displays. I will refer to the first, second, third eras in organizing the evolution of the genre.

Each of these eras overlaps somewhat with one another, with the first two eras constituting the period in which the tradition was most vibrant. The ending of isolation with improved national communications, the onset of tourism in Trinidad in the 1940s, commercialism, and most importantly, the Revolution, have contributed to the general decline of the tonada tradition in the latter part of the twentieth century. In the first two eras, the tonadas were “alive;” that is to say that they were composed and performed by specialized musicians who actively cultivated – adding to and subtracting from – the tradition. Thereafter, the tradition eventually became a traditional music of the past – ceasing to evolve and instead shrinking in the size of its repertoire and number of musicians. Its conservation stems from the purpose of preserving a local and unique tradition representing a marker of cultural identity for Trinidad and its musicians. The modern musicians, however, still trace this music back to the founders.

The first era begins with the “fathers” of the tonadas: Patricio Gascón and Tando Villa. It is important to remember that a definitive date of origin cannot be given to the tonadas trinitarias and that similar variants may have existed prior to Gascón and Villa. As described earlier, the tango – the first name given to the tradition – may be traced as

far back as 1846 or 1851, according to some scholars. Zayas (June 10, 2009) believes that Gascón and Villa already were performing with their groups in 1851, yet Gascón was only 11 years old at this time. The overwhelming evidence points to the time period of the Ten Years War as the origin of the tonada groups. Earlier manifestations were likely musical processions related to the cabildo(s). The theory with the most supporting evidence links the instruments and the songs to Gascón and his experiences as a volunteer soldier and cane-cutter. The link to the countryside stems from contact and familiarity with white peasant music and a musical background in the congo cabildo. The small drums were developed by Gascón in the manner of the yuka drum of the cabildo (perhaps with influences of or exposure to other drum tríos), making them easier to transport. These drums were used in the Valle de los Ingenios during the harvest time in addition to – or alternatively – during the Ten Years War. The güiro and the singing style of the tonadas campesinas were influenced by guajiro music, while the drums, hoe blade, and antifonal singing testify to the influence of the congo cabildo.

The first two urban groups, established during or closely following the Ten Years War (1868-1878) were led by Gascón and Villa, respectively. They performed the tonadas as serenades and as nocturnal musical processions on religious (and later patriotic) holidays. The first organized group manifestations are generally considered to be tied to the eve of San Juan. Following this, the groups may have proceeded to incorporate other public holidays. As a result of selecting the same times to perform (whether this was coincidental or planned is not known), of which the most important was the eve of San Juan, the groups occasionally met in public areas. Here, the groups competed by seeing who could contribute the best song creations (García et al. 1972).

These meetings spurred the composition of puyas, tonadas aimed at teasing or poking fun at a certain person’s social life or a scandalous event. In addition, as Trinidad was a center of revolutionary activity in the nineteenth century, patriotic songs were composed venerating war heroes or symbols of *cubanidad*. Religious songs corresponded to the celebration of saint’s days – religion comprising a central aspect of local culture. Social commentary on the cotidian aspects of barrio life and songs of love also became common. In this way, the first tonada groups represented the birth of an Afro-Cuban barrio manifestation, comprising a secular form of public entertainment comparable to rumba in Havana and Matanzas.

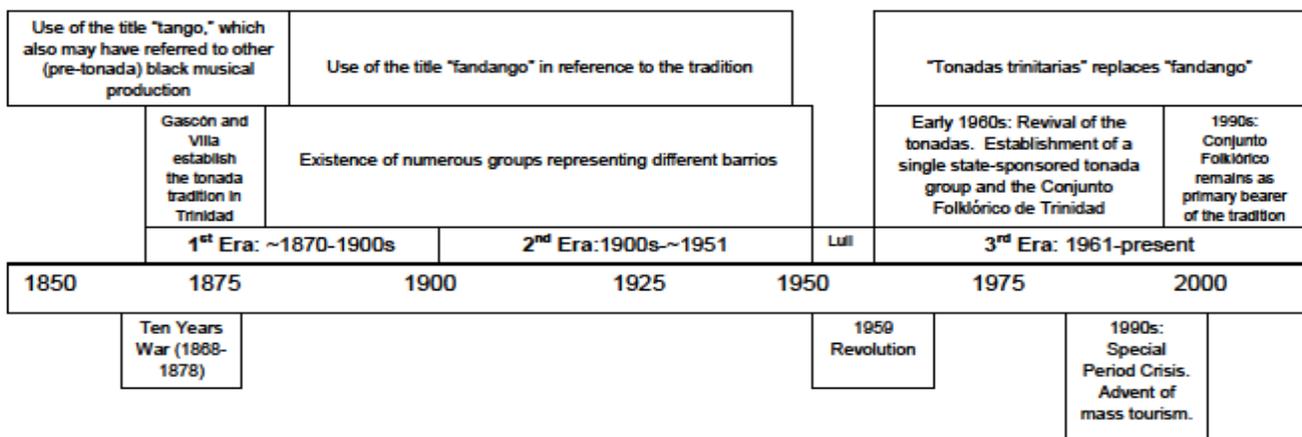


Figure 4-3. Timeline of the evolution of the tonadas trinitarias.

The First Era

The first era represents the crystallization of organized tonada groups and the active development of repertoire and traditions. Previous to the organization of groups, Gascón and his cohorts in the Valle de los Ingenios (during the war or cane harvest) may have begun to develop the repertoire. The songs composed and performed by the tonada groups began to be heard regularly in the streets. The participants and

onlookers, after hearing the choruses repeated one after another, began to assimilate these songs as their own. They became the “property” of the town rather than of a specific author. This is often a characteristic of oral folklore, which is handed down through the generations. Yet this lack of authorship was present from the beginning, testifying perhaps to the democratic nature of these groups. Similar manifestations, such as the *coros de clave* or rumba traditions, generally value authorship to some degree. The *claves*, for example, were often written by the director of the group, who also arranged the voices and rehearsed the ensemble. In rumba, while many of the older songs or refrains no longer can be tied to an author, in more recent times (since the early-mid 1900s) authorship is valued. *Rumberos* will say “that piece there is by Tío Tom” or “that one is of Flor de Amor’s rumbas.” Yet the rumba is also democratic, or authorless, to a degree. In its early days in the nineteenth this may have been more pronounced at the *barrio* level. The surviving *rumbas de tiempo España* (colonial rumbas “from the time of Spain”) are strictly public domain. These and the majority of rumbas remain authorless. However, the fame of rumba composers in Havana and Matanzas in the twentieth century, such as Tío Tom and Flor de Amor, resulted from the popularity of their rumbas, which were performed often by local and professional groups. The *tonadas* are very different in this aspect. They were rooted in a close-knit marginal community in a small town. Furthermore, Trinidad was for the most part isolated from the rest of Cuba from the 1850s until the 1930s. This locality and isolation in conjunction with the democratic nature of the groups made it unnecessary to assert authorship. All participants and onlookers learned the songs as they were performed in the street and internalized them as their own. These were amateur musical groups

made up of friends and neighbors. They did not hold formal rehearsals as did the *coros de clave*; the *tonadas* have a shared structure and general melodic contour, making them easy to learn in relation to each other. In learning a new *tonada*, the director, composer, or singer would have simply taught a few of the singers the short chorus melody and text. To this, the same harmony would have been applied as in all the other songs (a third below the primary voice), and the *guía* would have improvised in the same space allotted to any other *tonada*. In essence, learning a new *tonada* was only learning a short chorus text. There was no need to assign authorship to each *tonada*, which is essentially a chorus. Only the musicians performing a relatively new *tonada* might know who it “belonged to.” For example, Joseíto sang a *tonada* that “belonged” to Alfonso Puig (which he must have heard from Puig during the late 1940s or 1950s). He remembered Puig as the author due to the fact that Puig wished no one to sing it other than himself. Other singers would say “no, I don’t sing that [song]!” This was because it dealt with raising the dead (Lares 2009):

Vengan a oír cantar a Luisa
Vengan a oír cantar a Luisa
Resuscita a los muertos en la tumba

[Come and hear Luisa sing
Come and hear Luisa sing
She resuscitates the dead in the grave]

The first era seemed to have a religious connection not present in later eras. Not only did the first *tonada* groups emerge on the eve of San Juan and other saint’s days, but following the nocturnal transit, the groups would proceed to the river bank to wash their faces. This semi-religious aspect linked to the baptism and possibly to the congo belief in the cleansing power of water, disappeared at least by the early twentieth

century. It may only have existed among the first groups – those of Gascón and Villa – and disappeared in the second era with the following generation.

Composition in this era was based around social commentary, and romantic, patriotic and religious themes. The active composition in this era led to the formation of the base repertoire. These songs were performed as serenades, in transit, or in meetings. These central activities spurred the creation of this repertoire. Why were romantic songs written? Why were patriotic songs common? Why were social commentary and puya songs necessary? The answers to these questions lie in the tradition's activities and the prevailing ideas of the day. Romantic tonadas were written with the purpose of singing at the home of the woman being admired. This tradition in itself reflects the gender relations and courtship practices in Cuba in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Women were expected to be humble and passive, and men were expected to court women respectfully; a serenade represented a romantic endeavor. The presence of patriotic songs owes much to the fact that Trinidad was a hotbed of rebel activity during the independence wars. Themes exalting Cuban nationalism were very popular at the time. Social commentary themes resulted from the fact that the tonadas originated within a closely-knit lower-class community of Afro-Cubans. The puyas have their origin in the meetings or competitions between two groups, where guías attempted to show mastery of improvisation through the use of witty texts. These elements formed the base of the tradition, to be handed down to following generations.

According to Joseíto's classifications, the first era lasted until the early 1900s, flowing into the second era. Since the eras are based primarily on generations

(especially those of the leaders or organizers), the first era spans more or less the participation of Gascón and Villa. Gascón died in 1918 at the age of 78. The older members tend to “retire” from the tonadas once they reach the age in which they can no longer actively participate in the long neighborhood transits. It is likely that Gascón was inactive in the tonadas during his final years, which would have left others to take over as organizers.

The Second Era

The second era begins in the 1900s or 1910s, and is marked by the transfer of generations of the organizers. In this case, if Gascón and Villa represented the first era, Alfonso Puig and others, such as Pepe Entenza, represent the second. The generational overlap is crucial in the evolution of the tonada tradition. Both Puig and Entenza were involved with the groups of the first era, perhaps from the time they were teenagers. As the generation of Gascón and Villa became less active, the next generation took over the tradition. It is possible that the tonada tradition declined in its activities at certain points during this period. Mayra Martínez (1983) believes the tradition suffered following the disappearance of Patricio Gascón as an active organizer, and that the economic crisis in Cuba in the 1920s harshly impacted the musical traditions in Trinidad. While the impact of the economic crisis on Trinidad may have dampened musical production temporarily, the retirement of Gascón did not likely impact the tradition negatively. Rather, the tradition seems to have grown. In the second era a number of tonada groups were present; in the beginning there had only existed those of Gascón and Villa. Either way, this caused the younger generation of musicians to pull together and assume responsibility of the groups themselves.

Joseíto (Lares 2009) described how when the organizers of the first era began to die or retire, Alfonso Puig, a bombo player of the first era, became the organizer of the tonadas in the second era. It is not clear if this was gradual or if the tradition had come to a standstill at some time. It is likely that at a certain point Puig would have simply taken over the organizational aspect. He is, however, remembered as one of the leaders of the second era.

This generation of tonaderos seems to have retained the tradition largely as it was in the first era, although the religious affiliations may have lessened. During the first era, it is possible that other tonada groups arose, representing other barrios. This is very likely; if the first two groups began performing in the 1860s or 1870s, then their exposure on the streets of Trinidad over many years would have stimulated the creation of new groups in the other barrios. A similar phenomenon took place in Sancti Spíritus, when Juan Echemendía, director of the coro de clave La Yaya, moved here from Havana. He established the first coro de clave in Sancti Spíritus, which led to the subsequent creation of other groups in neighboring barrios (Linares 1974, 69).

Many of the organizers of new tonada groups were tied at some point to a previous group, with whom they would have learned. For example, Alfonso Puig and his brother Félix performed with the groups of the first era, yet by Arnaldo's time, Alfonso Puig was a leader of the tonada (group) of La Barranca. The tonada group representing La Barranca was not in existence when Villa and Gascón first started. Thus, this barrio's group either emerged later in the first era (late nineteenth century) or at the beginning of the second era. Pepe Entenza, a singer who had been a member of Gascón's group, later led his own group in the second era, which lasted through the

1940s. What is certain is that by the early twentieth century, many different tonada groups emerged, representing the different barrios of Trinidad. Claro (Valdespino 2009) mentions the barrios of La Barranca, Simpá, Santiago, and Loma de los Chivos as having tonada groups when he was young (1940s).

The tonada groups continued to transit through the streets at night on saint's days and other days of public celebration; these were then expanded to include patriotic holidays, not present before independence from Spain in 1898. The tonada groups also continued to perform serenades and meet in competition. This is very important, as these activities were the impetus keeping the tradition alive and dynamic.

The groups' central activities were the reason that new compositions and improvisation were present. New tonadas with puya themes or commentary on barrio life were created to be *heard* by other groups and other barrios. Later, when these central activities were no longer present (in the third era), the impetus to compose was also lost. The textual improvisation of the *guía* was also an important element in competitions. The more creative and witty the *inspiración*, the more respect the *guía* gained. In this way he could counter his opponents and show his skill. In serenades, the *guía* was expected to perform in the same manner, so that the tonada could be appreciated by listeners. Thus, the *guía* was a central figure with an active role.

Although active composition continued, there was a slight change in the themes emphasized. Most markedly, there were no patriotic or political compositions addressing twentieth-century Cuba. The patriotic compositions of the tonadas only address heroes and themes dealing with the wars of independence. The musicians do seem to have continued actively composing themes with social commentaries. This

testifies to the continuing economic difficulties for the marginalized population of Trinidad. The composition of tonadas with religious themes may have declined somewhat, as the tradition became secularized. Although this is not certain, the fact that the element of river-washing on the day of San Juan was lost during this time supports this theory. While many scholarly sources cite the river-washing following the transits on the eve of San Juan as being present among the earliest groups, this is no longer mentioned in later generations. None of the elder tonaderos I interviewed described this as part of the second era. On the whole, however, the second era remained very similar to the first era, continuing to flourish and spread among the barrios of Trinidad.

The second era extended into the first years of the 1950s (1950-1951), according to Arnaldo and Joseíto. Following this there was a lull in the tonada tradition. This may have been due to the passing or retirement of the elder leaders (Alfonso Puig, Pepe Entenza), as occurred in the early 1900s when Gascón retired. In the 1960s the tradition was once again revived by the younger generation, including Francisco “Maína” Cuéllar, Claro Valdespino, Joseíto Lares, and Arnaldo Fonseca, supported by the new cultural policies of the Revolution. This was the beginning of the third era.

The Third Era

The greatest change in the tonada trinitaria tradition occurred during the transition to the third era, which began following the Revolution, in the early 1960s. The socialist government’s emphasis on national culture spurred the birth of state-sponsored groups which, in addition to staging and “cleaning-up” Afro-Cuban traditions previously looked down upon by white Cuban society, attempted to “rescue” certain uncultivated traditions and educate the Cuban population through culture.

The end of the second era and the lull of the 1950s coincided with increasing anti-government activity on the island. Following the 1959 Revolution, the new government enacted a number of reforms aimed at lessening racism and discrimination in Cuba, problems that had plagued the society since colonial times. Due to Afro-Cuban participation in the wars of independence, open discourses on scientific racism and black inferiority were ended, yet the dominant classes remained prejudiced towards black culture. In 1959 the new government desegregated public areas, pushed for fairer employment opportunities, provided free medical care, and started a national literacy campaign, all of which generally benefited blacks more so than whites. Yet Castro ultimately sidestepped the issue of race, denying Afro-Cubans a voice and prohibiting any black organizations. Despite this double-standard, the socialist government aimed to preserve and disseminate traditional music. For the first time, Afro-Cuban drumming and song was heard in the mass media, and cultural festivals were created which featured music from around the island (Moore 2006).

This emphasis on culture was accompanied by the creation of a number of folkloric groups, many of which specialized in Afro-Cuban traditions, such as the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional. Scholars in Cuba had mixed views on the state's involvement in Afro-Cuban traditions. While some wholly supported the movement, others disagreed. Helio Orovio, for example, believed that the creation of certain groups was a form of cultural reservation: these ensembles were to be the only outlet of Afro-Cuban forms the government wanted to disseminate. In stark contrast to their contexts in the barrios, the songs and dances presented by professional folkloric groups were "cleaned up," highly rehearsed, and static. Cultural advisors at this time wanted to

elevate folklore to a professional level, so as to be more appealing to general audiences. This meant that dancers often trained with choreographers and musicians rehearsed “sets” with standard rhythms according to the repertoire. Thus, the Revolution was not necessarily supporting Afro-Cuban culture as *it was*; conversely, a more refined, acceptable version was created. One of the major changes was the lack of spontaneity and improvisation present in the street-level performances (Moore 2006).

These changes were also observed in the tonada trinitaria tradition of the third era. In Trinidad, the Conjunto Folklórico de Trinidad was established in 1963. The tonadas, which had been seemingly inactive (or much less active) since about 1950 or 1951, were revived in 1961. Joséito (Lares 2009) explains this revival. He recalled an activity for a school in nearby Santa Clara (likely the University of Las Villas), in which representative musical groups were to be brought from different regions. Students needed to bring a group from their province to perform. One of the students was from Trinidad, from the barrio of La Barranca, and was familiar with the tonadas. He told a cousin of his, who was a tonadero, to put together a group for him to take to Santa Clara. A group was formed, put on a bus, and sent to perform in Santa Clara. The tonada group then persisted in Trinidad, and shortly thereafter, the local branch of the Ministry of Culture (this was referred to by musicians as “Cultura”) incorporated them under its authority. As part of Cultura, however, the group lost its independence; it was now under official control of a local branch of government.

This incorporation into Cultura had both positive and negative impacts. As the sole tonada group in Trinidad, this meant that the entire tonada tradition was now sponsored from above. Cultura was in charge of organizing cultural events and

festivals on the island, and the tonada group could be called at any moment to perform. While the group does seem to have persisted to some degree with nocturnal transits, according to one instance cited by Joseíto, this activity was rare, leaving the tonada group established primarily as a folkloric ensemble. Cultura established a program to which the tonaderos had to adhere. Carpio (Fonseca and Carpio Quezada 2009) stressed this as one of the primary differences from before and after the Revolution. Before the groups had been internally directed; with Cultura they lost their independence. It is also important to remember that the tonada musicians belonged to the working classes. They were shoemakers, butchers, carpenters, or bakers. They were not employed as professional musicians by the state; rather they were paid a small salary for performances and expected to excuse themselves from work (with government permission) in order to perform on the days assigned by Cultura.

Arnaldo described one such performance in Havana in 1976. It was a competition for musical groups from different regions of the island, hosted in the Amadeo Roldán Theater. Arnaldo and a group of tonada musicians were taken to Havana for a week. They received first place in the competition, ousting the only professional group there, Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. According to Arnaldo, the tonada group was very good; when they started singing everyone would quiet down and listen. The members were the older and most experienced tonaderos, including Francisco “Maína” Cuéllar and Zoila Estrella. The now-elder generation was also present: Claro Valdespino, Arnaldo Fonseca, and Joseíto (Fonseca and Carpio Quezada 2009). Some of these tonaderos were also members of the Conjunto Folklórico.

Maína, a bombo player, was the group's main percussionist. In fact, when the Conjunto Folklórico was founded in 1963, some of the best tonada musicians filled its ranks. In addition to Maína, who was recognized as one of the best bombos, Rogelio Lugones (an experienced guía), Zoila Estrella, Natividad Zayas, and Paula Lugones (these last three were female chorus singers) remained active in the group for an extended period of time. In the 1980s and 1990s these elder musicians began disappearing from the ranks, succumbing to age or to death. Their passing represented the loss of one of the last generations that had experienced the tonada tradition of the second era. The final generation, including Arnaldo, Joseíto, Claro, and Gregorio, are now in their 70s. These are the only remaining tonaderos who experienced the tradition of nocturnal transits and serenatas, even though this aspect has been largely absent for the majority of their life spans. Having learned the tradition during the tail end of the second era (up to about 1950), they are the most musically able and the most knowledgeable when it comes to the history of the tonadas. A number of elements changed in the tonada tradition following the Cuban Revolution.

First of all, it was in the third era that the name "tonadas trinitarias" began to be used. Previously known locally as fandango, Cultura bestowed the name "tonada trinitaria" on the tradition, a clear link to the tonadas of the countryside. Nationalist sentiments in Cuba, as elsewhere, are often strongly linked to an idealized rural culture. In Cuba, *lo cubano* (what is Cuban) is often romanticized as having originated in the predominantly white rural population (guajiros). Although African influence is recognized, it is seen more as an addition rather than a core of identity. The term "fandango," which referred generally to music and dance of the black population in

colonial Cuba, ceased to be used when Cultura absorbed the tonada tradition. “Tonada,” therefore, not only links the tradition to the Cuban countryside, but is a more acceptable “whitened” name. Furthermore, the addition of “trinitaria” extracts the tradition from its locality and places it within a national context. “Fandango” in Trinidad could not be confused with another tradition; locals knew exactly what this referred to. However, on a national stage “fandango” is a very general term. “Trinitaria” was added in order to link the genre to the city of Trinidad, in a national context.

Another alteration resulting from the direction of Cultura was the group’s dress. In the second and first eras, when the groups were informal assemblies of musicians, there were no uniforms, costumes, or particular style of dress adhered to. However, when the tonada group of the third era performed in festivals such as the competition described by Arnaldo in 1976, the musicians were dressed uniformly in white guayaberas. The guayabera is another symbol of *cubanía* (Cubanness) originating in the countryside. The guayabera is even used as the normal dress shirt for the Cuban Communist Party. The style of dress used in many state-sponsored folkloric groups, including the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional and the tonada group, represents a “typical” or “traditional” dress. This usually consists of a white shirt (guayabera for the tonaderos), a colored handkerchief around the neck, pants, and sometimes a hat. This is another attempt to “dress up” (literally) the tradition. Being Afro-Cuban in origin and tied to the marginal barrios, this type of folklore needed to be uplifted and refined in the eyes of culture advisors in order to be acceptable to the dominant (white) population in Cuba.

The absorption of the tonadas by Cultura not only dressed up the tradition, but

was an imposition of state control. While Cultura's efforts to preserve traditions such as the tonadas trinitarias must be admired (after all, the tradition may have been lost completely without state intervention) the tradition was altered both consciously and unconsciously with control from above. As a result of the disappearance of the fandangueros of the disappearance of the fandangueros of the second era and the new confines within Cultura, spontaneity was reduced considerably. This meant that the nocturnal transits as serenatas – not to mention the performances on saint's days and



Figure 4-2. Group of tonaderos in “traditional” style dress.

other holidays – disappeared. This is the most important distinguisher between the third era and the previous eras: the tonada tradition lost its central activities. In the third era, the only spontaneity took place in informal gatherings in the park, where some musicians and singers would sing some tonadas and rumbas while sitting on the benches (Carpio Quezada 2009). No more need for shoulder straps to carry the drums, no more transiting, no more serenatas were performed. Essentially, the tonadas performed in the park were part of an informal jam session. Otherwise they were

performed only within the Conjunto Folklórico and the state-sponsored tonada group. Since the 1990s, even these park gatherings have been lost.

The size of the groups was also altered significantly. While in the first and second eras large groups of followers joined the tonada groups as they proceeded from house to house, the loss of the tradition of nocturnal transits meant that only the musicians themselves composed the performing group. In essence, the line between performer and audience became more pronounced. The performers were put on stage and dressed up, clearly distinguishing them from their audiences. The decline in participation by audience members must have also led to decreased interest and exposure to the tonadas. Once the genre is “frozen” and put up on stage as if it were a museum relic, the younger generations are separated from this. It cannot appeal to the masses on the popular level when it is withdrawn from its barrio context.

While on the one hand we may see the lack of nocturnal transits and local public participation in the tonadas as contributing to the decline of its popularity, we must also take into account the role of popular music dissemination in Cuba. By the 1950s the mass media disseminated popular music in Cuba through radio and discs, which were played in *victrolas* (jukeboxes) in bars and other public venues. The decline of the street tradition of the tonadas coincides with the rise in consumption of popular music in Cuba. More and more young people were dancing to the sounds of national and international bands. In Trinidad, this phenomenon can be traced to the 1930s, when communication with the rest of the island was improved through connections to the central highway system. Previously, Trinidad had been virtually isolated since its fall as a sugar giant in the late 1840s. Following the 1930s, increased communication with the

rest of the island relieved the isolation Trinidad had experienced for well over half a century. It was in this isolation that the tonadas trinitarias were born and thrived. Thus it is not surprising that their decline followed the end of this confinement. If unique local traditions are born out of locality, then it only makes sense that decreased locality contributes to their demise.

As a result of the retardation of the tonada tradition following the second era, the composition of new songs also withered. The fact that meetings between tonada groups and competitions were no longer present meant that there was no need to “show off” the best new musical creations. As stated earlier, new compositions were written in order to be *heard* by other groups or individuals, for which they were performed in the transits. When the tonada groups no longer transited through the streets, no longer performed serenades at homes, and no longer competed with other groups, there was no one there to listen! When the tonadas were removed from their original context and put on display by Cultura as a preserved tradition, the lack of public participation and appeal dropped, and the tonadas became a static tradition. Although composition declined, it did not *completely* stop. At least two tonada texts appear to originate in the third era.

Although many of the tonadas cannot be clearly dated, except perhaps those which deal with patriotic themes of the independence wars, one text clearly stands out as a composition of the third era. Although it may have been from the latter part of the second era, its text signals that the great singers of the first and second eras are no longer present, and that they must be remembered for their contributions.

Unan su voz trovadores
Háganlo con emoción

Al recordar los cantantes
De nuestra jurisdicción
A Pepe Entenza, el Tando Villa,
Patricio Gascón, que era tan feliz
Y no olvides nunca a aquel guía sublime
Que se llamaba Alfonso Puig

[Unite your voices troubadors
With emotion
As you remember the singers
Of our jurisdiction
Pepe Entenza, Tando Villa,
Patricio Gascón, who was always so happy
And don't ever forget the sublime guía
Named Alfonso Puig]

All of the singers mentioned were part of the first era; Alfonso Puig and Pepe Entenza carried the tradition into the second era as leaders of tonada groups. Puig and Entenza were still active in the 1940s at the end of the second era, as Arnaldo recalls, thus this composition must have been composed after this. It was likely written during the beginning of the third era by those who had known these men (or at least some of them) personally. The younger generations are not quite as familiar with the names of the great tonaderos of the past. This tonada venerated those singers of the first two eras, such as Alfonso Puig, which had either passed or were no longer part of the tradition. The second new text of the third era is not really a new composition, but an adaptation. The melody is exactly that used in a tonada referenced earlier:

Qué lindas son
Qué lindas son
Las mañanas de San Juan
Qué lindas son

The text was simply changed to:

Qué lindas son
Qué lindas son
Las tonadas trinitarias
Qué lindas son

[How beautiful they are
How beautiful they are
The tonadas trinitarias
How beautiful they are]

This is clearly an alteration of the third era, as the name “tonadas trinitarias” was not used previous to this time. In the end, it is clear that compositional activity deteriorated greatly during the third era. As composition withered, the existing repertoire began undergoing canonization.

While the largest collection of tonadas trinitarias (sixty-four tonadas) is included in Suero Reguera’s 1972 article “Tonadas trinitarias,” many tonaderos, such as Arnaldo, recall there being more than one hundred at one point – presumably before the decline of the tonadas in the third era. The 1972 article was the first written documentation of tonada texts, obtained from the elder tonaderos of the time, such as Rogelio Lugones. Sadly, the same number of songs could not be catalogued by a present-day investigator. Even the eldest tonaderos, such as Arnaldo and Claro, cannot recall many songs, simply because they are rarely performed. Arnaldo recounts how in the second era, the tonaderos would get inspired as the transit proceeded, causing them to jar from memory song after song. Essentially, the ambience of the street contexts (charged with rum and emotional energy) helped the tonaderos recall songs, one after another. The loss of this ambience in which highly charged musicians fed off of one another’s energy resulted in the radical transformation of performance. When the tonada group and the Conjunto Folklórico were formed in the 1960s, the performance contexts did not “inspire” the musicians in the same way. Performances were allotted a certain amount of time and the groups rehearsed which songs were to be performed beforehand. Thus, if the tonada group was to perform at a certain cultural festival and had time for three

songs, those songs would be rehearsed and performed within the time limits. According to Arnaldo, “before” (before the third era) a single tonada could be sung for an extended period of time, until the guía felt inspired to start a new song. This was no longer the case in these “folkloricized” performances of the third era. The Conjunto Folklórico, for example, began performing the tonadas as an introduction to its show. The shows of the Conjunto Folklórico, as is the case for many Afro-Cuban folkloric groups, consist of a short sample of a number of Afro-Cuban traditions. The Conjunto Folklórico includes local (from Trinidad) traditions – such as the tonadas and local carnival traditions – as well as general Afro-Cuban manifestations, such as rumba, palo, and orisha dances. Carpio referred to these folkloric shows as *guiones matadores* (killer sets) (Carpio Quezada 2009). A typical set for the Conjunto Folklórico is still performed in the same manner. Two tonadas trinitarias are sung, followed by *yambú*, *guaguancó*, and *columbia*. Then a short, traditional act from Trinidad’s carnival is performed, called the *matanza de la culebra* (the killing of the snake). In this piece, a comical character employing a rough Bantu-Spanish dialect, removes a (fake) snake from his basket, frightening onlookers, and proceeds to kill it. Following this, some Afro-Cuban religious (palo and orisha) dances are performed in costume, and finally some *son* is played while the dancers pull audience members up to the stage to participate in the dancing.

While the tonadas were still employed in the Conjunto Folklórico, the same songs tended to be repeated over and over, limiting the repertoire further. In the tonada group the repertoire was likely much larger, although the altered context and restricted number of performances impeded the vibrancy of the tradition. Perhaps because many of the elder members of the tonada group were also members of the Conjunto Folklórico, the

same songs became prevalent in both groups. There exists a filmed recording of the tonada group from the 1980s, spurred by the joint efforts of María Teresa Linares and the University of Las Villas, yet this proved inaccessible during my trip. The available audio recordings, from the 1990s, were made by the local folkloric group “Cocoró” and the Conjunto Folklórico. The former’s recording featured many of the elder singers of the tonadas. Yet the fifteen or so tonadas recorded there are largely the same as those recorded by the Conjunto Folklórico. Since few lead singers remained, the songs they sang frequently were those that were preserved. These same songs – and in fact, an even a lesser number – are performed regularly by the Conjunto Folklórico still. Since 1990, when the tonada group ceased to exist, there has been no group dedicated solely to the tonadas. Only the folkloric group Cocoró and the Conjunto Folklórico were left performing tonadas in the 1990s. Presently, only the Conjunto Folklórico performs them. Yet, as previously described, these groups only perform one or two tonadas per show. Puchi, the lead singer for the Conjunto Folklórico, tends to repeat the same songs show after show, drawing from a pool of less than ten. These songs have become standards, yet represent the range of tonada themes: romance, patriotism, puya, and social commentary.

Not only have the venues, spontaneity, improvisation, dates, and repertoire changed, but the performance of the music itself has been transformed. This includes alterations to tempo, instruments, number of voices, and timbre, and the addition of rumba to the tonadas. The tempo has generally increased. When Arnaldo and Claro listened to a recording I had just made of the Conjunto Folklórico performing a tonada, they both shook their heads and said it was too fast. Although different tonadas have

slightly faster or slower tempi, overall, according to Arnaldo, they should be *calenciosas* (slow and cadential). While the recordings of the folkloric groups Cocoró and the older recording of the Conjunto Folklórico both still involved the elder tonaderos of the tonada groups, the present-day Conjunto Folklórico no longer includes these members, such as Rogelio Lugones and Maína.

To the inexperienced listener, their interpretations sound great, yet the remaining elders (Arnaldo, Claro, and Joseíto) do not regard them as true performers of the tonadas. They see this younger generation as playing too quickly and not possessing the finesse required to perform the tonadas correctly. While the present Conjunto Folklórico does start the tonadas very slowly, they tend to speed up fairly quickly. Even though the tempo does not seem to be very much different from those tonadas I recorded with the elder musicians, the overall feel is a world apart. What seems to differentiate the Conjunto Folklórico in terms of making them sound faster or quicker is the playing of the quinto and the güiro. The quinto is hasty, louder, and more complicated in its rhythms among the Conjunto Folklórico players. When Cheo, who is from Arnaldo and Claro's generation of tonaderos, played the quinto with the elder musicians, his sound blended much more with the other drums and singers. He did not "step on" the guía or the chorus, and overall his patterns were less "busy" than those of the present Conjunto Folklórico musicians. Carpio attributes the tendency of younger drummers to play faster to the influence of rumba. By this I mean the influence of modern rumba from Havana, primarily, where the present generations of rumberos emphasize a fast, aggressive, and complicated style of rumba called *guarapachangueo*. The younger musicians of the Conjunto Folklórico had only limited exposure to the

tonadas. Most of them did not grow up hearing this music; they did not learn it through family ties as the older generations had. The younger generations are more familiar with rumba and popular music. The tendencies in rumba to push the tempo and employ aggressive drumming do not fit into the tonada tradition. The tonadas come from a time when cadential, beautiful, lyrical, and presentable were adjectives used to describe a quality group. They come from a time when serenades were sung to women by troubadours, from the time of the large coros de clave in Havana and Matanzas. The generational changes in values, morals, and attitude are therefore manifested in performance as well. When the younger players attempt to perform the tonadas which no longer exist in their original context but are rather relics of the past, they simply will not be able to reconstruct the tradition exactly as it was. In terms of the güiro pattern, the present players play the same pattern employed in contemporary Cuban salsa. This sounds very “square” when executed with the tonadas of the Conjunto Folklórico. Again, it stands out rather than blends. On the other hand, Gregorio, who is only a few years younger than Arnaldo and Claro and performed with the tonada group of the third era, executes a simpler pattern. He emphasized the downbeat and plays a short pickup to this. The bombo is also played very differently by Claro with the elder musicians as opposed to the bombo player of the Conjunto Folklórico. While Claro is constantly interacting with the quinto and singers with variations, accents, and slides, the bombo player of the Conjunto Folklórico remains relatively stable.

All these factors indicate that while the elder tonaderos perform the tonadas in a very dynamic and interactive fashion, the younger Conjunto Folklórico musicians’ interpretations are relatively static. One example of this is the fact that the bombo does

not interact effectively with the other drums and singers, which makes for a relatively unchanging percussive accompaniment. Nelson's (a Conjunto Folklórico drummer) bombo-playing is a prime example of this; it does not compare with the complexity and level of interaction present in Claro's bombo-playing. The static bombo pattern exemplified by the younger Conjunto Folklórico musicians remains in the background while the quinto is forced by itself into the foreground, where it stands out more than it should (according to the opinions of the elders). In my observations, the lack of interaction means that the instruments and singers do not cooperate as much; they do not feed off of each other's contributions. Yet among the elder musicians, even the campana and güiro can be heard interacting with the percussion and singing. They reside somewhat in volume while the guía performs, and on the pickup to the chorus they become slightly more aggressive, as does the rest of the ensemble. In the present-day Conjunto Folklórico, however, the drummers and the singers repeat the same tonadas over and over again for small crowds of tourists who have never heard this music. The dynamic is not present due to the lack of experience with the tonada groups of the past, and also because they are merely performing a task of labor. In contrast, the elder tonaderos had performed tonadas out of personal conviction; they *enjoyed* it, and they fed on one another's enthusiasm. I was able to observe this in the reunion I recorded. It had been a long time since most of them had come together to play, and they were very excited.

The formal staging of the group also adds to this lack of interaction. When the tonada groups transited through the streets, there was no specific format for the setup of the musicians; the drummers were in close proximity and the chorus clustered

together for the most part, but the movement of the group was collective and democratic. They proceeded through the streets together, with a group of followers who could join in on the songs if they chose. The staging of the groups in the third era set them apart not only from the public, but from the natural collectivity of the first and second eras. A format was developed whereby the drummers formed a semicircle with the chorus behind them and the guía out in front, all of them facing their audience. How does this impact the interactions among the musicians? For one, they are no longer facing each other. In transit, the musicians could physically move and interact as they chose with one another and with others. On stage, the group was static. No shoulder straps are needed to carry the drums; they are played seated, between the legs. The physical motion is therefore limited. The chorus stands still, and the guía sings facing the crowd, rather than interacting with the other singers and drummers.

As mentioned before, when I recorded the elder tonaderos performing in a makeshift reunion, the energy levels rose as they interacted with one another, feeding off of each other's enthusiasm. Even though they were seated in a room rather than in transit, they did not seem to be performing *for me*, as much as for each other. They were taking the opportunity to enjoy themselves together, as they had not been reunited for some time. I must mention that I did provide a compensation for their time, but they did not necessarily expect this of me. They appreciated the fact that I wanted to document this music. On the other hand, when I recorded the Conjunto Folklórico performing, I was expected to compensate them up front. These musicians have a job to do; they put on shows for tourists all day for most of the week. In Cuba's tough economic conditions, they cannot be blamed for their entrepreneurship. Almost all

Cubans will describe themselves as “*en la lucha*” (in the fight [for survival]). Afro-Cuban folklore as a commodity has proven one of the most effective means for blacks to access the tourist dollar. I will examine this in depth in the section on the impact of tourism. For now, I will continue examining the impact of staging the tonadas, using the Conjunto Folklórico as an example.

Contemporary Performance: Conjunto Folklórico de Trinidad

The Conjunto Folklórico performs in Trinidad’s Palenque¹⁷ de los Congos Reales, a small café-style enclosure with a small bar and group of tables and chairs facing a stage. An overhead system of vines forms a “roof,” providing shade to the small groups of foreign tourists who enter from the steamy streets, eager to enjoy a refreshing *mojito* and seek solace from the long walks on the cobblestone streets.¹⁸ The tourists enter, unsure of what to expect; they see the stage, devoid of performers but with a cluster of percussion instruments on the side. They take a seat, and are approached shortly by a waitress who is clearly bored with her job. The Conjunto Folklórico musicians, who have been lounging around a table or near the entrance, casually conversing, get up to go to work. They are not dressed in uniforms, but in casual clothes. When enough tourists are present, they are cued to start a show by the director. Now, they are not necessarily reluctant to quit their lounging and get on stage, but it is clearly a repetitive motion for them; it is work. The dancers go backstage to put on their costumes while the lead singer (Puchi), standing at the forefront of the group, begins a tonada (which he has probably performed dozens of times that week). Puchi and the musicians are

¹⁷ *Palenques* were runaway slave communities in Cuba, where escaped slaves lived communally, independent of the dominant society.

¹⁸ Descriptions of the Palenque de Congos Reales and the Conjunto Folklórico’s performances are based on my personal experiences and observations during my visits to Trinidad in 2008 and 2009.

relegated to the right margin of the stage. The drummers and singers form a line behind him. When I visited in the summers of 2008 and 2009, the chorus consisted of one or two female and one or two male singers. The tonadas are performed first; usually one or two is sung. These tonadas are performed as separate pieces, each beginning with the guía's introduction, and ending with a fermata on the last note of the chorus. They only last a couple of minutes each. As mentioned earlier, this in itself is a huge change in the performance style. This contrasted greatly with the elder tonaderos' reunion. In the style of earlier eras, the tonaderos' tonadas can last upwards of five minutes (or even much longer), until another tonada is introduced. This is done by interjection, and is performed by the guía or another lead singer (who will then become the guía for that tonada). The difference here is that the percussion does not stop; interjection of a new tonada can occur at any time, following the ending of the chorus's text. All of this is done within the same key. This same phenomenon is observable in rumba, in its informal context.

The rumba and the tonada trinitaria traditions are very similar in the way that they were transformed during the Revolution from localized, unprofessional expressions of marginalized Afro-Cubans into professional folkloric manifestations. Previous to the Revolution, rumba was largely informal and spontaneously performed in *solares*¹⁹ in Havana and Matanzas. Following the Revolution, rumba was incorporated into the repertoires of folkloric groups such as the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional, and standardized. It was no longer a localized, oral tradition with endless variations. Suddenly, there was increasing emphasis on categorizing and labeling the different

¹⁹ A *solar* is a common area between apartment buildings, usually connected to the street by a narrow passageway. This was a central social area for the marginal classes of the barrios.

types of rumba, with “right” and “wrong” ways of performing these. While on the one hand the rumba was given a level of unforeseen exposure, the government banned the spontaneous rumbas of the barrios. Instead of a couple of rumberos getting together, getting inspired with a song, adding a couple of boxes and spoons, and spontaneously creating a rumba jam, an event featuring drumming (including for religious events) would need to be planned ahead and a license obtained. While the tonadas have a slightly different trajectory, the resulting standardization was largely the same. The tonada trinitaria was “rescued” by Cultura, yet the tradition has been altered and ultimately became part of the constellation of Afro-Cuban folklore employed in entertaining tourists. Unfortunately, while rumberos were numerous and the rumba tradition continued to flourish in Havana and Matanzas, the number of tonaderos diminished and the tradition became frozen. Another similarity between the two is the segmentation of performances that reduces connectivity between songs.

As in the tonada tradition, where one song sprung from another without a stop in the percussion, rumbas were also once like this. In informal settings in the barrios, the percussion could proceed for hours without stopping, as singers interjected one song after another. This collective ambience in rumba has been largely replaced by performance which is largely stage-like: the lead singer(s) sing the text, introduce the montuno, the dancers come out, and the song ends after a couple of choruses. The format of the tonadas performed by the Conjunto Folklórico is largely the same. Each song begins and ends exactly the same. The tonada is performed, and after a few choruses the guía introduces a faster-paced chorus and the group speeds up, going into a rumba.

The addition of rumba to the end of tonadas is entirely a creation of the Conjunto Folklórico in the third era. During the first and second eras, only tonadas were sung by the groups of the tonadas trinitarias. Some were slightly faster or slower, yet this was the only genre employed. Claro Valdespino, one of the drummers of the Conjunto Folklórico when it was founded in the early 1960s, is credited with this invention. This type of rumba is *not* the rumba from Havana or Matanzas (yambú, guaguancó, columbia). Rather, what is referred to as rumba in the tonadas is actually a derivative of the *rumba managua*. It is played in a very similar rhythm to that of the tonadas; not much changes except for the tempo, which speeds up. What Claro did was position this as the second half of a tonada, in order to make it more exciting for stage shows.

Fernando Ortiz (1954) describes “managua” as a game among the congo slaves and their descendents of colonial times, consisting of singing puyas, or about impossible fictitious situations. Similar to the *maní*, another congo music-and-dance game performed in colonial times consisting of danced fighting between men, the *managüeros* (those who played managua) would show up at a party – often where yuka was being danced and sung – and managua would be danced. The rumba managua did not have a specific set of drums; whatever drums in use at a dance of the congos (again, yuka drums were common) were employed. The managua was likely performed at some point in the Cabildo de San Antonio de Congos Reales in Trinidad, where the yuka drum was used as accompaniment. The influence of the singing of puyas in the tonadas may have come from the texts of the rumba managua, although this is not necessarily the case. The rumba managua is likely an older tradition than the tonadas, but they were certainly contemporaries in the late nineteenth century during the

independence wars. The following rumba describes Spanish soldiers from the viewpoint of the Cubans:

Allá vienen los curros bajando la loma
Vestidos de blanco parecen palomas

[There go the Spanish descending the hill
Dressed all in white, they look like doves]

The majority of these rumbas are made up of two-line texts sung as choruses, between which the lead singer improvises. Thus, the drums (whose rhythm only changes slightly in the bombo) and percussion speed up when the rumba is introduced. All of the tonadas performed by the present Conjunto Folklórico end with a rumba. The switch is signaled by the guía, following a few repetitions of the tonada chorus. He interjects the rumba chorus, the percussion speeds up and increases in volume, and the chorus responds. The slower, more cadential tonada is thereby “livened up” by the rumba at the end. It is important to note that this is done for live shows. On the CD recorded by the Conjunto Folklórico in the late 1990s with the title “Tonadas trinitarias,” only tonadas are performed, without the addition of the rumba (Conjunto Folklórico de Trinidad, 1999). Thus, it is clear that the genres are still considered separate. Yet the Conjunto Folklórico musicians, such as Puchi, seem to feel compelled to always add a rumba at the end of the tonada. When I learned the drum patterns from the Conjunto Folklórico musicians, they showed me both those for the tonadas and those for rumba, as if they were closely intertwined with one another. In Puchi’s case, it was interesting to observe his interaction with the elder tonaderos in the reunion I organized. All of the musicians were of the older generation (in their late 60s or 70s) except for Puchi, who was 56 at the time. Puchi and Arnaldo represented complete opposites here, Arnaldo being the eldest singer and strict in terms of what he considers a good tonada. More

than anyone, he seemed to put his whole heart into the tonadas and thoroughly enjoy them; he in no way expected any payment or compensation for his participation (although he very much needed it and I insisted). Puchi, on the other hand, sings the tonadas daily as part of his job; it is routine for him and he definitely expected monetary compensation. The music began with Arnaldo introducing a few tonadas, after which Puchi interjected few more. Yet after Puchi's third tonada he introduced a rumba, to which the ensemble responded by speeding up. Arnaldo, on the other hand, never introduced a rumba; he sang only tonadas. In my interview with Arnaldo, I was confused as to the relationship between the tonadas and the rumbas. Clarifying this, he explained that in the old days (first and second eras) the tonada groups sang only tonadas. The rumbas were reserved for other events; they were separate. Furthermore, the rumba is danced in a specific way, while the tonada is not tied to a specific dance. As explained by Carpio, rumba is performed not for transit, but for dancing in a designated area (such as the cabildo or a park). In essence it represents a separate, secular congo element which was fused to the tonadas in the 1960s for folkloric shows.

This reflects on another fundamental change to the tonadas trinitarias in the third era, which relates to function. The move to folkloric shows represents the addition of the tonadas to this frozen realm of folklore. The "original" tradition of the old days (from eras one and two) of transits and competitions essentially stopped. The tonadas were "rescued" by Cultura, following the appearance of an ad-hoc tonada group put together for a performance at a school in Santa Clara in the early 1960s. The fact that the tonada was no longer a living tradition, practiced and upheld by the inhabitants of the

barrios of Trinidad, determined an alteration in its basic function. Essentially, Cultura decided to appropriate the tonada group so as to preserve what it saw as a traditional cultural element of Trinidad. And it did just that – preserved it. The tonada came to represent a frozen relic of a past tradition. Of course, it became more frozen and standardized over the following decades, as those who had lived during the heyday of the tonadas were no longer part of the scene. Thus, beginning in the 1960s, the tonadas moved from independence towards dependence (on Cultura) and incorporation. By this I mean that previous to the Revolution, the tonadas were independent groups run by their organizers as they pleased. They represented a distinct tradition, set apart from other ensembles and musics. Following the Revolution, the tonadas were co-opted by the national government and placed into a category of folklore on two levels. The first level is that of the local folklore of Trinidad, which includes other largely by-gone traditions performed by the Conjunto Folklórico, such as Trinidad’s carnival traditions. The second level is that of Afro-Cuban folklore, encompassing all general Afro-Cuban traditions of the island, such as orisha music, palo, bembé, and rumba. Cultura in the end did little to promote the tradition or keep it alive. Participation in one national competition in Havana did little to disseminate the genre. Perhaps this is one reason that so little is written and known about the tonadas trinitarias in Cuban musicology. Only scholars and students from the Central University of Las Villas produced a few articles on the tradition. Thus on the national level (not to even mention the international level) the tonadas trinitarias are a largely unfamiliar topic. On the local level, where Cultura employed the tonadas more vigorously, the impact was not resounding. If their aim was to educate Cuban audiences on their own cultural

traditions, this was largely ineffective in Trinidad. No support was given for the tonadas to continue in their original manner (transits), no effort was made to arrange for classes, and the economic crisis of the Special Period in the 1990s meant an end to Trinidad's tonada group. Previous to the 1990s the strategy was primarily documentation and preservation. This was done largely by those scholars who published articles on the tonadas from the Central University of Las Villas in the university magazines *Signos* and *Islas*.

With the advent of the Special Period, government-funded research was largely cut off in the realms of folklore and music. For this reason there has been virtually no research in the area of the tonadas trinitarias. The economy began to incorporate capitalist elements, and the doors were opened for tourists as Cuba struggled to emerge from economic disaster. Suddenly, money became the driving force behind cultural production. The tonada group was no longer sponsored because it was not producing money; likewise the tonaderos had no reason to continue the group as they were busy struggling to find ways to get by. Only when musical production (especially Afro-Cuban) became more profitable did it emerge as a worthwhile endeavor for musicians. For this reason the Conjunto Folklórico endured. As a group representing the spectrum of Afro-Cuban folklore as well as those traditions unique to Trinidad, shows were arranged to entertain tourists and generate money.

The Impact of Tourism

Trinidad now has the fortune to be one of the tourist centers of the island, due largely to its colonial-style architecture and enchanting cobblestone streets. Tourists enjoy the relaxed Caribbean ambience, nearby beaches, and the famous waterfalls of

the nearby mountains, and enjoy a *mojito* while listening to the exotic and unfamiliar Afro-Cuban traditions of the Conjunto Folklórico.

This is how the tonadas are preserved today. In fact, tourists are exposed to the tonadas trinitarias more than any of the local younger generations! The tonadas are relegated to the folklore stage, no longer performed in the streets or in public. Cubans themselves do not figure among the spectators in the Conjunto Folklórico's shows. Any persons lounging and enjoying the show at the venue, called the Palenque de Congos Reales, are expected to purchase drinks, which are sold in *divisa* (Cuban dollars). Since Cubans are paid in *moneda nacional* (*pesos*), which in summer of 2009 was 1/26 of a Cuban dollar, items sold in *divisa* are much less accessible to Cubans. On the other hand, almost all services and items for tourists are available only in *divisa*. This creates an unofficial segregation between Cubans and foreign tourists. In 2009, Raúl Castro instituted changes which allowed Cuban citizens to access hotels and other services previously only available to foreigners, who pay in *divisa* (before this, these areas were off-limits to everyday Cubans). Although Raúl's changes represent an advance towards greater egalitarianism, they are for the most part symbolic. This does not change the fact that most Cubans, who may only make the equivalent of twenty Cuban dollars a month, remain excluded from these services. Thus, Cubans still have limited access to hotels, restaurants, dance clubs, and concert venues which require payment in *divisa*. The musical venues aimed at tourists often consist of folkloric shows performed by professional groups, such as the Conjunto Folklórico. Therefore, in Trinidad Cubans do not really have access to the shows of the Conjunto Folklórico, unless they come in to chat with a friend who is an employee. In addition, many locals

would not attend even if they could. Why? Because the music and dance performed for tourists are not the same as those consumed by Cubans. Although there are rumba venues in Havana open for both Cubans and foreigners, these are more dynamic, involving participation of Cuban audiences. Rumba is a living, dynamic genre, and so Cuban rumberos participate. Yet the folkloric shows of the Conjunto Folklórico are aimed *only* at tourists. Cubans do not participate primarily because they perform frozen music – genres of the past or those which are not cultivated popularly by contemporary musicians in Trinidad. They perform the same tonadas, the same orisha songs, the same rumbas in their short sets. These are performed over and over again throughout the day, six days a week. They are meant for small groups of tourists who enjoy the sample, yet will only hear it once. For them it is not repetitive, yet for the musicians and locals, it is nothing special. This is the point that the tonadas have reached: they are viewed as nothing special. They represent a local tradition of the past, cultivated once upon a time by tonaderos who are now dead or retired. As Esquenazi Pérez (2009) put it,

Tourism does something; it converts the tradition into a scheme. So, for example, you get to Baracoa and they make a type of [folkloric] group for that . . . they'll dance . . . a little piece of each of the little sones that they have there that are ancient, and then with the little [traditional] outfit, but nicer, and what happens is the opposite [of preservation] – it is lost, because in actuality the rest of the people I'm not sure if they keep practicing the tradition or not, but it's like they take it and they freeze it. So they take something that is traditional and they freeze it, they put it on for tourism, and thereafter it remains ritualized.

It is as if the tonadas are a preserved ritual of the past, put on display in a museum as a symbol of Trinidad's unique cultural heritage. After all, Trinidad is most famous for its past. Tourists come to enjoy the yellow and pink colonial-style architecture, the centuries-old Spanish churches, and to take rides on horse-drawn carts through the

cobblestone streets. Many streets are lined with local artisans who sell straw-woven hats and figurines. Tourism is the biggest money-maker in Trinidad, and the Conjunto Folklórico has a part in this. Just like the miniature conga drums and cheap maracas available for tourists, the tonadas have become a historical cultural commodity.

Tourists in the Palenque de Congos Reales are even offered the tonadas trinitarias CD of the Conjunto Folklórico for purchase, so that they may take a piece of Trinidad home with them.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

The tonadas trinitarias have survived well over a century in Trinidad, evolving as social, economic, political, and generational changes left their mark. The ties to the Valle de los Ingenios, the congo slaves and their descendents, the guajiros, and the Ten Year's War have not been forgotten by historians and the surviving tonaderos.

The origin of the tonada trinitaria will never be absolutely certain, yet it is clear that it grew out of the circumstances surrounding Trinidad and the Valle de los Ingenios of the nineteenth century. The confluence of Africans, Europeans, and creoles in the Valle de los Ingenios created a unique environment in which transculturation and creolization played central roles in developing Trinidad's cultural heritage. The city's height of prosperity in the 1840s as one of the top sugar exporters of the island was followed by economic crisis and the downfall of the sugar industry, spurring a mass movement of people from the valley to the city. Many city dwellers continued to work as cane-cutters in harvest time, as the case of Patricio Gascón shows. He, along with Tando Villa, both of whom were black musicians of the Cabildo de San Antonio de Congos Reales, were likely exposed to white peasant music and other musical influences as they cut cane in the Valle de los Ingenios. Both here and in the Ten Year's War (1868-1878), urban and rural blacks and whites worked and fought side by side, participating in a continual process of creole musical creation. In addition to the primarily congo and guajiro elements present in the music and instruments of the tonadas, the processional component was tied to the ancient tradition of saint processions in Trinidad. The tonadas represented an Afro-Cuban secular variant of these transits.

The evolution of the genre has seen changes through the generations and the

involvement of the Revolutionary government. These generations are represented by the notion of the three eras. The first era was led by the generation of Gascón and Villa, whose groups represented different barrios of Trinidad. These groups are said to have first emerged around the time of the Ten Year's War, tied to the celebration for San Juan. After proceeding through the streets on the eve of San Juan, the musicians and followers would make their way to the river to cleanse their faces. The themes of the tonadas reflect their nature. These included religious (tied to the saint's days), social, romantic, patriotic, and puya themes. The puyas were used when two tonada groups would meet in competition. The other tonadas were sung either in transit or as serenades sung outside the homes of "fans" of the music. The traditions of competition and serenades continued much the same in the second era, when the younger generation took over. The political and economic turmoil of the 1950s in Cuba, as well as the growing presence of popular orchestras and bands likely contributed to the lull in the tradition during this time. In the early 1960s, the Revolution attempted to "rescue" the tonadas by sponsoring a single tonada group in Trinidad. While this certainly encouraged the revival of the tradition in some ways, it also contributed to the folkloricization of the tradition. In the 1990s, the only tonada group in Trinidad succumbed to the pressures of the Special Period economic crisis and tourism became the sustenance of Trinidad. Since then, most of the elder tonaderos have vanished or retired, and the genre remains alive only as a small part of staged folkloric performances for tourists by the Conjunto Folklórico.

The future of the tonadas trinitarias rests in the hands of younger generations of local musicians, whose experiences with the tonadas have been much different than

those tonaderos of the first and second eras. The past half century has seen a decline in the tonada traditions. Once a vibrant, lively manifestation of the barrios of Trinidad, the genre has become constricted in its performance, canonized and ultimately relegated to folklore shows for tourists. So what is its future?

The future of the tonadas trinitarias is uncertain. It will certainly be an extension of their present status, tied to tourism, folklore, and the economy. As we trace the history of the tonadas, we see them rise and flourish and then fall due to economic hardships and generational disconnect. We see them become folkloricized under the Revolution and standardized for tourism. If this standardization and canonization continues, fewer and fewer songs will survive in performance. The performances will remain within the realm of folklore and tourist shows, being cut off from the general public. Younger generations will be less and less familiar with this old, stale tradition, and younger musicians of the local folkloric groups will learn it solely out of necessity. When they do learn it, it will no longer be through exposure to the elder tonaderos, rather it will be transmitted to them by drummers who themselves never performed in a tonada group. Essentially, the frozen tradition will continue to shrink and likely ultimately disappear. This is Esquenazi Pérez's opinion. Why? Well, her view is "el turismo acaba con todo" (tourism wipes everything out) (Esquenazi Pérez 2009). While this is certainly a valid argument, other factors are in play, one of the most important of which is the economy.

The tonadas are simply not enough of a viable economic product to stand on their own as a commodity. They no longer serve their original purpose of socio-musical entertainment of the lower-class masses of Trinidad. In modern-day Cuba, everyone is *luchando* (struggling). This means that economically, people will do whatever it takes to

get by. Ironically, perhaps the only reason the tonada survived past the 1990s is tourism. With the absence of the Ministry-sponsored tonada group beginning in the 1990s, the tonadas survived only in the local Afro-Cuban folklore groups. These groups – especially the Conjunto Folklórico – became important in Trinidad as the tourism scene grew. Only the Conjunto Folklórico remains in existence today, and as mentioned previously, they depend solely on performances for tourism. Aside from the Conjunto Folklórico the tonadas are no longer practiced. Thus, the future of the genre also depends on the viability of this group and the presence of tourism in Trinidad. Fortunately, Trinidad is one of the most popular tourist centers of the island outside of Havana. Almost everyone in Trinidad is involved in some way or another with tourism; it is their main access to Cuban dollars. As expressed by Esquenazi Pérez (2009), “la gente vive del turismo; o sea el que no alquila casa vende algo” (the people live off of tourism; if they are not renting rooms they are selling something). The musicians of Trinidad do the same. If they are not playing son or salsa in the street or in a café, or performing with the Conjunto Folklórico, they are not making money. So, I imagine the tonadas will continue to be cultivated in the Conjunto Folklórico in the years to come, yet in the long run it is likely they will disappear. After all, the tourists themselves are not expecting to hear the tonadas trinitarias specifically per se; they come, listen and watch the performance as a spectacle. In fact, the tonadas do not even contain a dance component on stage, which makes them less essential than the rumba and religious dances, with their elaborate and colorful costumes. The tonadas could easily be left out of the cycle in the face of other more “enticing” dances such as the orisha and congo traditions. Thus, only as long as the Conjunto Folklórico *chooses* to include the tonadas

in its repertoire will they still be performed. If the future of the tonadas rests solely on the choices of one small group, the future does not look particularly hopeful. At the very least, we can be thankful that the tonadas trinitarias have survived into the present.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- abakuá* – A men’s secret society established in Cuba by the *carabalí* and their descendents.
- barrio* – Marginalized or lower-class neighborhood.
- bombo* – The lowest-pitched drum used in the tonada trinitaria. Also refers to the player of this drum.
- campana* – Hoe blade used in the tonada trinitaria. Struck with an metallic beater, this instrument repeats the basic rhythmic cell to which also others must adhere. Also referst to the rhythm played on this instrument.
- clave* – Another name for the *campana* used in the tonada trinitaria. Also refers to the rhythm played on this instrument.
- carabalí* – In Cuba, this refers to the slaves brought from the Calabar region of West Africa and the surviving cultural elements of this group in Cuba.
- Conjunto Folklórico (Conjunto Folklórico de Trinidad) – Performance group established in 1963 in Trinidad specializing in Afro-Cuban folkloric music and dance.
- congo* – In Cuba, congo is an umbrella term referring to the many Bantu ethnic groups brought as slaves from the central western area of Africa. The term also refers to the surviving cultural elements of these groups and their descendents in Cuba (*congos*).
- fandango* – This referred to what is now called the tonada trinitaria. This name was used commonly in Trinidad previous to the Revolution.
- guajiro* – This refers to Cuban peasants and their derivative culture.
- guía* – In the tonada trinitaria tradition, the lead singer.
- güiro* – Gourd scraper used in the tonada trinitaria.

quinto – The highest-pitched drum used in the tonada trinitaria whose role is improvisatory in character. Also refers to the player of this drum.

rumba – A musical tradition originating in and around the barrios of Havana and Matanzas in the mid-late nineteenth century. Cultivated primarily by urban blacks, it is a result of the influence of African- and Spanish-derived musical elements.

un solo golpe – The middle-pitched drum used in the tonada trinitaria.

tango – This was the first name given to what is now called the tonada trinitaria. It may have also referenced pre-tonada black musical production in Trinidad such as processional music or slaves' dances.

tonada – Literally “tune.” Also used used to reference the tonada trinitaria.

tonadas campesinas – Refers to the tonadas sung by *guajiros*. These were poetic texts accompanied by stringed-instruments are largely derived from Andalusian and Canary Islander musical traditions.

tonadas trinitarias – Refers to the musical tradition established by Patricio Gascón and Tando Villa in which a set of three drums, a *güiro*, and a *campana* accompany a chorus and *guía* who interact in call-and-response style.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Barnet, Miguel. 1976. *Biografía de un cimarrón*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores.
- Capablanca, Enrique and Carlos Venegas Fornias. 1998. *La Habana Vieja. Trinidad. Patrimonio Cultural de la Humanidad*. Havana: Editorial de Letras Cubanas.
- Carpentier, Alejo. 1979. *La música en Cuba*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas.
- Carpio Quezada, Pedro. 2009. Interview by author. Trinidad, Cuba. June 26.
- Castellanos, José. 1981. *Trinidad: biografía de un pueblo*. Miami: Laurenty Publishing Inc.
- Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Música Cubana (CIDMUC). 1997. *Instrumentos de la música folclórico-popular de Cuba*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.
- Conjunto Folklórico de Trinidad. 1999. *Tonadas trinitarias*. EGREM, Auténtico Producciones. CDM 015 (CD).
- Cuban Music Website: The History of Cuban Music.
<http://www.lordtiger.com/1roots.html> (accessed December 1, 2009).
- Esquenazi Pérez, Martha. 2007. *Del areito y otros sonos*. Havana: Ediciones Adagio.
- _____. 2009. Interview by author. Havana, Cuba. June 18.
- Fonseca, Arnaldo, and Pedro Carpio Quezada. 2009. Interview by author. Trinidad, Cuba. June 28.
- García, Alicia. 1972. "De la historia de Trinidad." *Islas 43* (September-December): 51-64.
- García Alvarez, Raúl. 1992. *La Trinidad: embrujo del Nuevo Mundo*. Havana: Editorial Pablo de la Torriente.
- García, Rosalía et al. 1972. "Del folklore trinitario." *Islas 43* (September-December): 65-104.
- Giro, Radamés. 2007. *Diccionario enciclopédico de la música en Cuba*. 4 vols. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas.
- Guerra, Ramiro. 1989. *Teatralización del folklore*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas.
- Hagedorn, Katherine. 1995. Anatomía del proceso folklórico: The "Folkloricization" of Afro-Cuban Religious Performance in Cuba. PhD diss., Brown University.

- _____. 2001. *Divine Utterances: Performace of Afro-Cuban Santería*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Helg, Aline. 1995. *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886 -1912*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Lara, Bernardo. 2009. Interview by author. Trinidad, Cuba. June 28.
- Lares, Anselmo "Joseíto." 2009. Interview by author. Trinidad, Cuba. June 29.
- León, Argeliers. 1984. *Del canto y el tiempo*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas.
- León, René. 1983. *Trinidad historia y leyendas*. [S.l: The Author].
- Linares, María Teresa. 1974. *La música y el pueblo*. Havana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación. Tonadas y música campesina. Coros de clave.
- _____, prod. 2006. *Antología de la música afrocubana*. 10 cd set plus booklet. Havana: EGREM.
- _____. 2009. Interview by author. Havana, Cuba. July 8.
- López Valdés, Rafael L. 2002. *Africanos de Cuba*. San Juan, PR: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe.
- Manuel, Peter. 1995. *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music From Rumba to Reggae*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Martínez, Mayra A. 1983. "Tonadas." *Revolución y cultura* 126 (February): 54-58.
- Mendoza Lorenzo, Leidy. 1986. "Estudio sobre el Cabildo de Congos Reales 'San Antonio,' de Trinidad." *Islas* 85 (September-December): 49-73.
- Moore, Robin D. 2006. *Music and Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Orovio, Helio. 2004. *Cuban Music From A to Z*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ortiz, Fernando. 1954. *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana*. Vol. 4. Havana: Dirección de Cultura del Ministerio de Educación.
- _____. 1978. *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*. Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho. (Orig. pub. 1940.)
- _____. 2001 . *La africanía de la música folklórica cubana*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas. (Orig. pub. 1950.)
- Pérez, Rolando. 1986. "El tambor en las tonadas trinitarias." *Clave* 3: 51-59.

- Sublette, Ned. 2004. *Cuba and its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press.
- Suero Reguera, Augusto. 1972. "Tonadas trinitarias." *Signos* 3/3 (May-August): 85-97.
- Schwartz, Rosalie. 1997. *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Scott, Rebecca J. 1985. *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Valdespino, Claro, and Pedro Carpio Quezada. 2009. Interview by author. Trinidad, Cuba. June
- Valdivia, Juan Gregorio. 2009. Interview by author. Trinidad, Cuba. June 29.
- Venegas Delgado, Hernán. 2005. *Trinidad de Cuba: Corsarios, azúcar y revolución en el Caribe*. Havana: Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Cultura Cubana Juan Marinello.
- Zayas Bringas, Enrique. 1997. "Clasificación de la música cubana." Unpublished manuscript.
- _____. 1999. "Trinidad. 486 años de continuidad musical." Unpublished.
- _____. 2001. "La tonada trinitaria: También es campesina." Unpublished manuscript presented at the XXVIII Semana de la Cultura de Trinidad, January.
- _____. 2009. Interview by author. Havana, Cuba. June 10.
- _____. 2009. Interview by author. Havana, Cuba. June 11.
- Zayas Escobar, Efraín "Puchi". 2009. Interview by author. Trinidad, Cuba. June 23.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Johnny Frías developed an interest for travel, geography, and culture at a young age. His fascination with culture and love of Cuban music led him to pursue studies in ethnomusicology. As the son of a Cuban exile, Johnny feels a very personal connection to the island and has studied its music both as a performer and academic. He has visited Cuba numerous times, studying performance of Afro-Cuban musics and conducting research. Johnny earned a bachelor's degree in music literature with a concentration in ethnomusicology and a minor in Latin American studies in 2005. During his undergraduate studies, he founded and directed Rumbakuá, a musical group dedicated to the performance of Afro-Cuban and Afro-Puerto Rican music. Johnny went on to live in Puerto Rico for two years, performing with Rumbakuá and other local groups. In 2008, he returned to the University of Florida to continue his studies in ethnomusicology at the graduate level. In addition to cultivating interests in race, ethnicity, and folklore, he hopes to contribute a Cuban-American perspective to the ethnomusicological discourse on Cuba.