



THE POPULAR TRADITION

No. 144

Year 2003

Maderas de Mi Tierra Marimba of an Era

Alfonso Arrivillaga Cortés



Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala



Maderas de Mi Tierra Marimba of an Era

Alfonso Arrivillaga Cortés

Introduction

In 1995 after more than half a century of intense work, the Marimba *Maderas de mi Tierra* ceased to exist by a government decree. One signature and the end of a story that should have also started with a signature (both presidential). At that time, maestri Nazario Rucal Xunic and Rigoberto Flores Mena (members of the group), concerned about the future of the ensemble, made an effort to preserve some memory of this institution. Part of the material I now use comes from that effort, for which I am grateful. In this way, official documents, correspondence, programs, activity summaries, and even poems help to organize this journey, which is quite confusing at times. There is a brief history of the group "*Maderas de Mi Tierra*" (1984), a chronology that seems to have been prepared by some official assigned to the ensemble. In addition to organizing some events, it includes some press notes, a document that was also helpful. I also use two interviews that Nazario Rucal Xunic conducted with Roberto Castañeda in 1996 and with Arturo Barrera Minera in 1997. These have a strong narrative quality, as Rucal likely participated in the search for this material from within, as a member of the group and a maestro of the instrument. Nevertheless, we hope to overcome this limitation in the future, with the help of other sources. This work is part of the commitment I made to maestri in the context of the dissolution of the ensemble in question. That is the purpose of this document: a tribute. Its history is as vast as its diverse components, and I believe this space for its exaltation is fair and deserved; I apologize for the absence of critical judgment, which I leave for other works.



Background

The development of the double marimba is linked to the rise of popular and dance music that came to Guatemala through foreign influences at the end of the 19th century. Previously, the musical landscape, although it contained expressions of popular and anonymous roots, was dominated by erudite music with an emphasis on religious themes, leading to a particular development. The influence was to create popular music that was always European in nature and intended for Western-style ensembles. It is likely that these influences also found some resonance in traditional musical forms developed during the colonial period and in the few decades of the Republic that followed. Thus, we find shottisches, mazurkas polkas, and paso dobles, recreated from their rhythmic airs in the compositions of prominent Guatemalan philharmonic musicians (who come from that tradition of religious-themed compositions).



Maderas de Mi Tierra, 1953. Trip through Europe. Arturo Barreda M., Efraín Tánchez, Joaquín Rodríguez, Silverio Castillo, J. Eustorgio Ovalle, David Flores, Everardo de León C., Faustino Valle, Higinio Ovalle. with annotation: 'Personnel who traveled through the countries of Europe from July 6 to September 25, 1953. The names... Paris, France, Sept. 1953'.

In the last two decades of the 19th century, we also find musical pieces with the of the *son*, an indigenous form that is being recreated by the mestizo musical discourse. A projection that undoubtedly begins with an aesthetic interest, but which, by the dawn of the 20th century, becomes part of a "national rhythm" driven by an aesthetic influenced by the nationalist movements occurring throughout the rest of Latin America. Another musical form developed by national composers is the *villancicos*, which have a significant impact on Guatemalan society. These musical forms, which begin to have a broader field for cultivation, will soon be incorporated into the repertoires performed by chromatic marimbas, which become increasingly popular in Guatemalan society in the early 20th century. One more detail characterizes this situation: the fact that many of these promoters (of the instrument's morphological transformation, execution techniques, and repertoires) come from family backgrounds that have cultivated, at times for centuries, erudite music in Guatemalan society. Therefore, in addition to the field of popular musical expressions, there is a marked interest in developing "erudite" forms for the marimba.

Chromatic Marimbas or Double Marimbas



At the end of the 19th century, the marimba gained great admiration among the ladinos, a cultural group that had grown up between the two contingents: the indigenous and the Creoles. Until then, the simple (diatonic) marimba was "a thing for the indigenous." However, the ladinos increasingly approached the instrument in search of new possibilities. In fact, some musicians, tempted by the possibility of exploring new avenues with the instrument, had begun to make alterations to its structure, aiming to transform it into what they later called the *Mari-piano* (or *piano bárbaro*). Undoubtedly, they sought to replace the piano, which was reserved for the wealthier classes, with an instrument that would allow them to perform a series of pieces that were part of the "refined and cultured audience."

In just a few years, with the emergence of the double (or chromatic) marimba, various claims of paternity arose, attributing this transformation to different regions. From Chiapas to the city of Guatemala, passing through the cities of the highlands, San Marcos, Huehuetenango, and the most important, Quetzaltenango—conditions were created that would allow the transition from the diatonic marimba to the chromatic marimba. Once this step was taken, repertoires began to emerge that sought to align with the standards of Western music with popular roots, as well as other genres considered more cultured. These were the conditions under which the century ended and developed in the first decades of the 20th century.

The marimba gained the admiration of the public, and dictators saw in this expression what they hoped would become a kind of national song. This explains how, during the dictatorship of Estrada Cabrera, the Marimba of the Hurtado Brothers became the president's favorite for his receptions. It is also at this time that the marimba made its leap to the international stage, becoming an important cultural ambassador for Guatemala, especially to the United States (but also in Europe). Thus, in the early decades of the 20th century, the marimba not only completed its morphological development but also advanced in execution techniques, repertoire development, and more. With the change of the dictatorship, Jorge Ubico created his own ensemble, an initiative that allowed another group of renowned maestri to dedicate themselves to cultivating the instrument. This, despite the fact that the dictator's intentions likely did not extend beyond having an ensemble for his celebrations and as a cultural ambassador.



On the Italian ship "Usodimare", in July 1953. With annotation: 'Passing through Gibraltar' (Spain).

Fortunately, maestri and instrument makers were driven by other interests: developing the instrument itself, refining playing techniques, and expanding the repertoire.

With the invention of the double marimba, the structure of the ensemble also took shape, becoming what we now recognize as the modern marimba group. It was composed of a large marimba with four registers, 1st piccolo, 1st tiple (usually the director of the ensemble), center, and bass—and a smaller marimba, or tenor, with three registers: piccolo, tiple, and bass. This setup significantly expanded both the harmonic and technical possibilities of performance. Added to the ensemble was the double bass, a modified three-stringed double bass, usually played by plucking the strings. During this early experimental phase, other instruments were also incorporated: wind instruments (like trumpets and clarinets, in search of the *marimba's* band format developed by the Hurtado Brothers in the United States) and percussion (especially the drum set). Some groups even included instruments such as the accordion, and later on, the xylophone became a common addition. This evolving dynamic of inclusion and adaptation gave rise, by the mid-20th century, to what became known as marimba-orchestras, an expressive form now in danger of disappearing. The most common setup that has endured to this day consists of two marimbas, a double bass, and a drum set. This study focuses on that ensemble format.

The Creation of the Marimba Maderas de Mi Tierra



The ensemble affiliated with the National Police was created in August 1934 by the President of the Republic, Jorge Ubico Castañeda. It appears that General Roderico Anzueto and Deputy Director Colonel Óscar H. Peralta¹ were the ones who suggested the name *Maderas de Mi Tierra*. The instrument was built by Maestro Rosendo Barrios, who by that time had already a strong reputation as a marimba builder. His marimba workshop, founded in 1904, had already exported several instruments abroad by then, commissioned by prominent Central American ensembles such as Marimba Cuscatlán, Alma Marciana, Marimba Panamá,



At the studios of Mexican Television (September 18, 1987). With a dedication on the front to Don Rigoberto and several signatures.

Marimba Nicaragua, Atlacatl, among others.

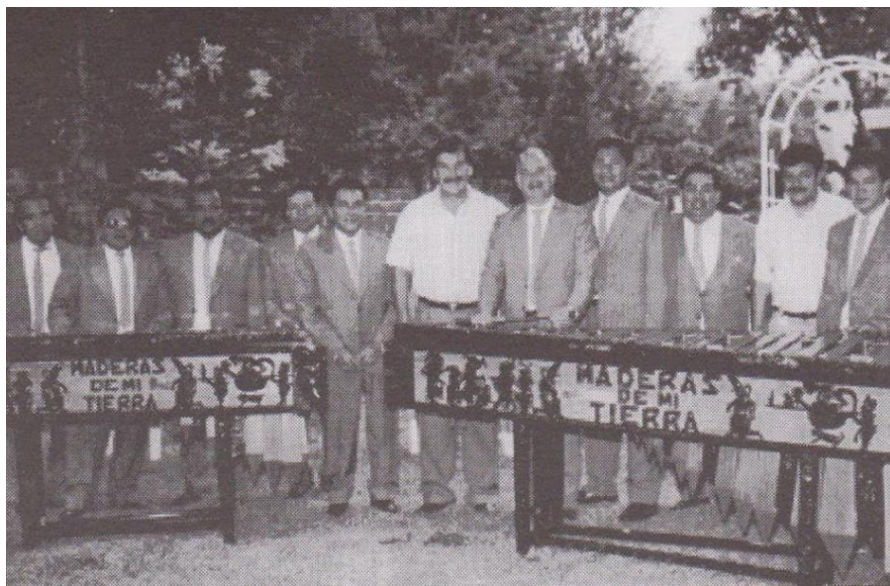
On their international tours, the ensemble served as the best introduction and promotion for the instruments. They became a sort of first point of contact with foreign markets. There was a clear correspondence between the places visited by this and other groups and the locations from which instrument orders later came.

This is illustrated in the trifold brochure published in 1996 by the successors of Mr. Rosendo Barrios, which documents marimba orders. In a letter dated July 10, 1935, American Foreign Trade requested the shipment of a tenor marimba "with indigenous style covering", confident that such an instrument could be commercially successful. Then, on September 20 of the same year, Jack Field Products requested: "Please send the price of two of your MARIMBAS of the same type and sound as those of the 'INDIAN MARIMBA ORCHESTRA' that came to Paris", clearly demonstrating how the international tours of these marimba ensembles served as vital business cards for the Barrios workshop.

Another reference further underscores the regional importance of these tours. A letter dated January 16, 1936, from the MARIMBA JASS-BAND of Costa Rica, states that they had been authorized by UNITED (referring to the United Fruit Company) to purchase new marimbas, and that they hoped Mr. Rosendo Barrios and his family would be the ones to build them.

¹ Both originally from Tacaná, from where they may have brought their interest in the instrument. H. Peralta himself, later in Petén, would continue supporting the Marimba Ecos Itzá, and would publish some of his own compositions in the magazine *Petén Itzá*.





Members of the ensemble and the instrument with President Ramiro de León Carpio in Antigua Guatemala (1994).

The marimba factory must have acquired a solid portfolio with the state, as many of the marimbas (*Alma Caminera*, *Kaibil Balam*, *Alma del Regimiento*, *Reina del Ejército*, *Guardia de Honor*, *Ecos del Itzá*), as well as others of great renown (*Centro Americana*, *Azul y Blanco*, *Gallito*, *Ave Lira*, *Instituto Indígena Santiago*), among more than 4,803, were built by this workshop (up until 1996).

The Beginning of a Long History of Performances



Whoever was responsible for naming the initial ensemble must have sought to include the most outstanding musicians of the time. The first members were: Mariano Valverde, Faustino Valle Villatoro, Baudilio Quiroz, Luis González, Carlos Mayorga, Valeriano Vásquez, Ricardo Quiroa, Manuel Herrera Pineda, Álvaro Rodríguez, and Carlos Guzmán. Valverde served as the Musical Director, while Valle Villatoro took the role of Artistic Director. Many of the ensemble's later directors were also well-known and respected maestros, recognized for their prestige in the musical circles of Guatemalan society at that time. According to *La Breve* (1984:2), it was on November 9, 1934, after three

rehearsals, that they gave their first performance on the President of the Republic's birthday. The program included *El Número Cinco* (march)², *Ensueño de Amor* (waltz), *Obertura Indígena* (by Jesús Castillo), *Amistad y Cariño* (schottische by Ruano), *Poeta y Aldeano* (by F. Von Supé), *Azul y Blanco* (polka), *Bella Guatemala* (schottische by Germán Alcántara), and *Escarcha* (march). This repertoire was common for ensembles of the time, which had already undergone significant evolution.

According to *La Breve* (1984:22), at the end of the year of its

foundation, David Flores Lemus, Manuel Pérez, Joaquín Rodríguez, and Víctor Mauricio Doguerty joined the ensemble. Between 1935 and 1938, Oscar H. Gálvez and Rubén Ramírez Corzo also joined. In the following years, the order of arrivals and departures is unclear, but the names of Luis Aldana, Silverio Castillo, Antonio Rangel, Salomón Argueta, Jorge Maldonado, Humberto Chávez, Agustín Cárdenas, Efraín Tánchez, and Manuel Román Jerez appear. According to Tánchez (sf:110), Higinio Ovalle



**Andrews Air Force Base: Washington D.C. 1956
Stamps on the back: Embassy of Guatemala 1614-18th Street N.W.
Washington D.C.
Official United States Air Force Photograph, Release by Andrews (blurry)
Washington 25, D.C.**



² This march was **Estrada Cabrera's favorite**, to such an extent that it became closely associated with the dictator himself.

Bethancourt was the director of the ensemble from 1937 to 1939, and then he was absent from the group for a long period. The last to join this group of maestros was Benedicto Ovalle Bethancourt, in 1956.

Unfortunately, we cannot determine the exact timeline of these changes in performers, which seem to have begun just a few months after the group was founded. For certain periods, there was a noticeable lack of stability among the maestros staff. It is likely that this space was used, at times, as a form of political reward. While we cannot precisely establish the ensemble's various configurations following its founding in 1934, about a decade later we once again find records of its composition. According to the official letter dated November 17, 1945 (with no reference number), the ensemble was composed of the following members: José Faustino Valle Villatoro (Director), Manuel Herrera Pineda, Luis Aldana Antillón, Salomón Argueta Román, Joaquín Antonio Rodríguez García, Everardo de León Cifuentes, Higinio Ovalle Betancourt, Manuel Pérez Sagastume, and Luis Silverio Castillo Estrada. At the time, the group was attached to the Civil Guard of Guatemala City and was "subordinated to the orders of Major Domingo Fuentes Girón, who was responsible for the care, preservation, and progress of the ensemble.

Regarding leadership roles within the ensemble, we find a distinction between artistic director and musical director, a division that would later disappear, and whose specific functions are not entirely clear in this context. Additionally, records often mention a person in charge of the ensemble, particularly in relation to tours. What is clear, as this note reflects throughout the ensemble's history, is its subordination to a (military) chief.

The same note adds that "Luis Marden, photographer from the General Staff of the National Geographic Magazine in Washington D.C., United States, during his visit to Guatemala City, wishing to take a souvenir abroad of the native instrument 'La Marimba,' was gladly accommodated by the artists of this instrument, which represents the Guatemalan national soul in all its forms." To fulfill this purpose, a recording was made of the piece

"*CLARINEROS*", a concertante work featuring obligato piccolo parts, recorded at the studios of the National Radio Station: '*La Voz de Guatemala*'. The music was composed by Benedicto Ovalle Betancourt, a composer from Quetzaltenango. The featured soloists in the recording were Salomón Argueta and Higinio Ovalle.

It concludes (almost fully transcribed) with the following paragraph: "*Qué lindo es Xelajú*," a national son originally composed by Gudelio Cifuentes, represents the truly native character of national music. It carries the indigenous feeling that is heard through its interpretation, speaking to us like an ancient legend of the Maya and Cakchiquel soul of our ancestral races—souls that, within the character of this national folklore, still bear the imprint left by the Spanish yoke. This recording was also produced by the ensemble Maderas de Mi Tierra and recorded in the same studios of La Voz de Guatemala, C.A."³

Radio also played a central role in the growing popularity of the marimba, especially in the context of the 1944–1954 Revolution, a context from which this ensemble was by no means exempt.



With President Carlos Arana Osorio, Everardo de León, and Higinio Ovalle? Guatemala, November 1975.



³ This type of exaltation of "the national" has been taking place since the late 19th century, when the emerging bourgeoisie turned the instrument into what was called a *voice of false nationality* (Arrivillaga).

In the note from Major Oscar Sagastume P., General Instructor of the Civil Guard, dated February 9, 1947, addressed to the director of the ensemble, we find the following annotation: "This office, fully aware of the valuable contribution made by you and your boys in the broadcasts of the Voice of the CIVIL GUARD, and especially in the weekly programs of the 'Respect Your Life' hour, is pleased to extend to you its warmest congratulations and urges you to continue reaping countless successes. As faithful servants of the Nation, we are obligated to cooperate in the advancement of our beloved and cherished homeland. In reiterating my heartfelt congratulations, I am especially pleased to subscribe myself as your most attentive and faithful servant. **FOR THE HOMELAND AND THE REVOLUTION.**

On May 15 of that same year, in his correspondence we found a note sent by Mr. J. Emilio Tercero C. (public accountant and auditor). In it, he shares that during a recent trip to Guadalajara, Mexico, he heard favorable comments regarding the ensemble's performance, with particular praise for the waltz "*Hermosa Primavera*" by Link. "In agreement with this sentiment, it is indeed true that when you perform waltzes by Paul Link, Waltiuffeldt, Strauss, Felipe Soto, Valverde, Morales Pino, to name just a few of these princes of inspiration, you grow in stature, overflowing with true torrents of sublime melodies, offering the world countless moments of delightful sensation." Based on these reflections, he takes the liberty of suggesting that the Thursday radio concerts be dedicated to what he would call the "Hour of the Waltzes."

In fact, the role played by the national radio station TGW, well into the 1970s, was key in the dissemination of the instrument. Were it not for these broadcasting spaces and the patronage provided by certain state institutions, particularly the army, the development of this instrument would likely have been much more limited. Likewise, it is due to this context that its development followed a linear and rather conservative path, closely aligned with an aesthetic that sought to please the governments in power at the time.

On December 11 of that same year, the marimba performed a concert in honor of the Blessed Virgin of Guadalupe, thanks to the sponsorship of the Director of the Civil Guard. The program included the following pieces: (1) *España Cañí* (Paso Doble) by Pascual Marquina; (2) Eleonor (Swing) by Higiomop Ovalle; (3) *Luis XV*

(Waltz) by Gamberto; (4) *Orquídeas de Guatemala* (Schottische) by Joaquín Rodríguez; (5) *Gusano de Luz* (Gavotte) by Paul Link; (6) *Al son de la Maugulina* (Quiespueyano Rhythm) by Enrique Arredondo; (7) *Bailando Tango* (Tango) by Manuel Herrera; (8) *Lidia Mercedes* (Waltz) by Faustino Valle; (9) *Dance of the Hours* from the opera *La Gioconda* by Ponchielli; (10) *Soñando Óperas* (Characteristic piece), anonymous; (11) *Club Verde* (Waltz), anonymous; (12) *Otra vez mi Cielo Azul* (Blues) by Luis Aldana; (13) *Alegrías de Amor* (Blues) by Fritz Kreisler; (14) *Managua Nicaragua* (Song) by Irving Fields; and (15) *Silverio* (Paso Doble) by Agustín Lara. In this case, we can see that the program featured compositions by some of the ensemble's own members recurring practice throughout its history, which allowed the group to develop a particular sense of ownership over certain pieces that would later become emblematic among lovers of this instrument.⁴

A year later, on May 25, 1948, Mr. Carlos H. Peñate G. and Mr. Oscar F. Chinchilla Bosque, in a letter sent from *Callejón Escuintlilla* No. 11, expressed the following: "We, as lovers of the divine art of music, and although we do not possess great knowledge of it, will never cease to praise you for the musical gift you possess; for we firmly believe that neither in Guatemala nor in the rest of the world is there any other ensemble that performs classical works as perfectly as you do..." This praise leads them to close the letter with the following remark: "... there is no other marimba that can face you, as others seem like village ensembles, played by amateurs, mostly with their fox-trots, rumbas, etc. which seem so monotonous and unimportant to us." A complimentary comment for the maestros, which further corroborates the egocentric view of the ladinos towards other musical expressions that are not their own.

Dated August 26, 1949, we find an interesting receipt referring to a tour of the Guatemalan Caribbean: "Q.81.00 From Mr. Manuel Armas, a resident of this Capital City, we received the sum of EIGHTY-ONE QUETZALES (exactly), as a loan, an amount which was provided to us in order to travel to the city of Puerto Barrios with the Marimba *Maderas de Mi Tierra*, with the aim of entertaining the inauguration ceremonies of the school in that locality. Guatemala." Signed: Faustino Ovalle, Joaquín Rodríguez, Eustaquio Ovalle, Manuel Herrera, Higinio Ovalle, Manuel Pérez, Everardo de León, and one more illegible signature. This receipt points to a current situation in which the maestros often resort to various actions to secure funds to cover their commitments, common obstacles today in other musical groups.



⁴ This will be another characteristic of these ensembles: having a repertoire of their own performers. But at the same time, it is a repertoire that would not exist without the participation of the ensemble in question and the vital space it provides for the composer.

Evidently, their activities in the country became increasingly prominent and recognized. Mr. Armando Gálvez Castro, Secretary General of the Scouts Association of Guatemala, sent a congratulatory message on November 23, 1950, on behalf of the Guatemalan Scouts, for their participation in the dinner for the delegations attending the event. He also took the opportunity in the letter to apologize for any mishaps and shortcomings in the services provided at the Hotel Palace, a situation beyond their control. It is interesting to note that, continuing with the correspondence of this ensemble, we find a note dated November 27, 1950, Of. No. 649. Cab, addressed to the Director of Musical Ensembles of the Institution (with a copy to the Director of the Marimba) from Castro F., Deputy General Director of the Civil Guard. Theoretically, this note is a transcription of the previous one: "The foreign delegates have also asked us to express their thanks to the Civil Guard and to the marimba *Maderas de Mi Tierra*, while also congratulating the institution, of which you are the distinguished director, for supporting the maintenance of musical ensembles that speak so highly of the musical culture of Guatemala."⁵ However, here the expressions are amplified, and at no point does it refer to the incident at the Hotel Palace, which in our opinion is the reason for the previous note.

On April 21, 1951, Álvaro Contreras Vélez, from the Executive Committee of the National Journalists' Union of Guatemala, addressed Colonel Anselmo Getellá, General Director of the Civil Guard. This was a letter requested for the marimba ensemble to perform on Monday, April 30, from 9 PM to midnight, to entertain the union's meeting in celebration of May 1st activities. The event will be held at the facilities of *Nuestro Diario*, 8a. Av. Sur, No. 12.

It is a pity that we do not have the records from the newspaper of its foundation, as undoubtedly, the intense activity of this ensemble began back then. We could elaborate further on the ensemble's history. Let us now note part of that journey starting from 1944.



Mentions, diplomas, medals, recognitions, commemorative plaques, and tours



According to Tánchez, General Ubico decided to send the ensemble *Maderas de Mi Tierra* to the United States to thank President Roosevelt for the construction of the hospital he donated to Guatemala. Adrián Recinos, serving as Guatemala's ambassador in Washington, made the necessary arrangements for the ensemble to perform on May 27, 1942, in the White House's Magnolia Garden, before the president. The tour began on May 3 aboard the steamship *Sra. Paula*, part of the United Fruit Company fleet, which took them from New Orleans⁶ There, they gave their first concert on the 13th of that month at the Junior Chamber of Commerce (Tánchez: n.d:108).⁷ The group traveled under the direction of José Faustino Valle Villatoro, with Mariano



Members of the ensemble with President Vinicio Cerezo at the National Estate of Santo Tomás (1989).



⁵ Typical of the official language of that time, it concludes: "Transcribed to you for the corresponding purposes. —FOR THE HOMELAND AND THE REVOLUTION—" (signed by Castro F.)

⁶ Another source of patronage for marimba ensembles and maestros—aside from the army and the state, as we will see—were transnational companies such as the fruit company (*la frutera*) or, in the case of Petén, Wrigley, which oversaw chicle exploitation. According to some, this was likely a way to curry favor with the regime and adopt a voice of nationality, a false nationality, as Arrivillaga would add.

⁷ Tánchez (n.d:108) adds that Guatemalan women living abroad, moved by the concert's reception, left the imprint of their lips on the instrument's keys. These kinds of emotional accounts are common in this author's narrative. See, for example, the perception he describes regarding the performers during the trip to Romania. In fact, he refers to them as the best marimba in the world, the emblem of Guatemala, a phrase that, years later, would be used to refer to the marimba itself.

Valverde as artistic director. Continuing with the ensemble since its foundation were Herrera Pineda and Quiroz. New members included Silverio Castillo Estrada, Everardo de León Cifuentes, Joaquín Rodríguez, Antonio Rangel, Salomón Argueta Román, Luis Aldana Antillón, Manuel Pérez, and David I. Flores.

By that time, the ensemble had secured a place in Guatemalan and regional cultural life, with its main areas of influence in Central America and Chiapas. The official document dated May 22, 1945, recounts a tour to Tapachula, Mexico. They traveled by train (first class) via Ayutla, where they were supposed to meet Mr. Arturo Samayoa, but he could not be located. Upon arrival, they settled into a (second-class) hotel and gave a well-received performance in the central park of that city. They later proceeded to the Workers' Society, where they also performed. Afterward, Mr. Arturo Samayoa took them to a shared house where they gave a serenade between 1:30 and 3:00 in the morning. On Sunday the 13th, they traveled to the port of San Benito where they gave a concert, then returned to Tapachula to give another performance in the city's central park. That same night, they played for a dance held at the Hotel Internacional. On Monday, they performed at the Military Barracks Regiment No. 29 in the afternoon, and at 6:00 p.m. they began their return journey "still by truck, and it rained as we reached the Mexican border. There, Don Arturo Samayoa offered us a tarp to protect ourselves from the rain. We continued the journey, arriving in Malacatán at 9:00 p.m., and left for Ayutla on Wednesday at 4:00 a.m. During the train ride, a piece of the drum set was damaged. I express to you my subordination and respect. For the head of the ensemble, signed: Manuel Herrera Pineda."

This prestige continued to grow. In 1950, Arturo Barrera Minera joined the ensemble, and a year later, Higinio Ovalle Betancourt and Everardo de León Cifuentes (although according to Tánchez, see above, they had already joined earlier). That same year (1950), José Faustino Valle V., Director of the Ensemble, reported on November 22, 1950, to "inform you of the developments during the artistic tour undertaken by the ensemble *Maderas de Mi Tierra* in Mexico City at the '5th Contest of Junior Chamber Queens.'"

The detailed report of the tour begins on Sunday, November 12, 1950, when they departed from La Aurora Airport via AVIATECA transport to Mexico City. The report notes the following:⁸ they stayed at the Oxford Hotel (Ignacio Mariscal 155). On Monday the 13th, they performed at Hotel El

Prado. On the 14th, they played at Chapultepec Castle, and that evening, at a dance hosted by the Junior Chamber of Chihuahua. On the 15th, they returned to Hotel El Prado for a performance at 3:00 p.m., followed by a recital at 5:00 p.m. at the presidential residence, Los Pinos, where they played for President Miguel Alemán. That same night, they performed at the Palacio de Bellas Artes during the evening gala of the Junior Chamber Queens' Contest. The ensemble's schedule was intense, as clearly illustrated by the events of that single day, the 15th. On the 16th, they had been invited to perform in Xochimilco, but due to lack of transportation, they were unable to attend the event. On the 17th, they had no scheduled activity, but on the following day, under instructions from Colonel Francisco Castro and the Guatemalan Embassy in Mexico, they performed at the home of the Presidential Chief Secretary, General Santiago Peñasoria, in the city of Cuernavaca. On Sunday the 19th, with the help of "Mr. Palmieri," a senior employee at the embassy, they received assistance with migration paperwork for their return to Guatemala. According to the tour report, the concert arrangements were made through Mr. Arturo Samayoa—the same cultural promoter mentioned earlier.

Dated November 16, 1959, we find the report of the trip made to the city of Baton Rouge, Louisiana (USA) on New Orleans International Week and the inauguration of Moisant International Airport. In addition, 16 recitals (referred to as "services" in the report) were held between October 31 and November 5, in venues including: the Stadium, the City Club, OAKS Auditorium, WBRZ TV Channel 2, United Commercial Travelers of America, Istrouma High School, Lions Club, Panamerican House, Modern Dance Club, Westdale Junior High, and Kiwanis Club Capitol City. According to Tánchez (n.d.:109), in 1966 the ensemble also took part in the New York World's Fair, performing at the Central American pavilion. That same year, they performed in Italy, where they received the Distinguished Traveler Diploma from the Italian Bank. According to *La Breve* (1984), in the late 1950s they also toured the Caribbean, visiting Haiti, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, and other South American countries.

Between 1956 and 1966, *La Breve* (1984) notes the following recognitions: Honorary Diploma of Merit from *Mundo Libre Interdiario al Servicio de la Cultura Nacional*, Medal from the General Directorate of Tourism of Colombia, Diploma from the Guatemalan Air Force, from AGAYC, Honorary



⁸ This type of correspondence addressed to superiors within a military environment remains somewhat jarring, especially considering it concerns a cultural mission. These reports are brief, and precise in their itinerary.



Members of the ensemble with President Romeo Lucas García at the Presidential House (1979).

Diploma of Merit from the Chief of the General Staff of the Head of State, a plaque awarded by the *Instituto Primero de Julio de 1823*, and a plaque from Club Xelajú. Judging by the type of paper, the fonts, and the group in which the materials were preserved, two poems appear to date back to the 1950s. These include a poem and a blues-song, both titled *Maderas de Mi Tierra*, original works by Maestro Jorge Cruz Sáenz.

The International Youth Festival: Romania



With the arrival of the Revolution, he continued to be assigned to the Civil Guard. Because of this, and the quality he represented, he was sent as a representative of the country to the International Youth Festival held in Romania in 1953. Aside from some official data about this trip, or from allusions—the most well-known being the one about the instrument going missing (Tánchez: n.d.), there are two main sources I use to highlight the most important parts of the itinerary during that trip, as well as some anecdotes that bring the tour to life. The sources in question are interviews conducted by Nazario Rucal with Roberto Castañeda (1996), who traveled as a member of a choreographic group along with Antonio Crespo and Marimba Durán, and with Maestro Arturo Barrera Minera in 1997. Castañeda and the dancers were indeed of the appropriate age for the event's purposes, whereas the members of the ensemble, as Castañeda recalls, were already "respectable older gentlemen."

The tour in question can be summarized as follows: they departed on July 16th aboard a Pan American flight bound for Panama. From there, they traveled to Colón, where they boarded a ship to Europe via Curaçao. After nine days at sea, they arrived in Santa Cruz de Tenerife on July 16th. Coincidentally, the island was celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which allowed them to witness the procession in honor of the patron saint. From Tenerife, they continued to Barcelona, and then to Genoa, where they spent several days dealing with paperwork and sightseeing. Eventually, they boarded a train headed for Milan. However, Chepito José Solís Rojas, the head of the delegation, mistakenly put them on the wrong train. "Fortunately, we as marimba players were very united, we looked after each other's luggage

and stayed together in the same train car," (Barrera, 1997:1). This incident is also mentioned by Castañeda in his account, where he recalls various difficulties during their return trip. The members of this tour included Higinio Ovalle Betancourt, Eustorgio Ovalle, J. David Flores, Arturo Barrera Minera, Joaquín Rodríguez, Everardo de León Cifuentes, Efraín Sánchez Ruiz, Silverio Castillo, and Faustino Valle Villatoro. As for Roberto Castañeda, he departed a few days later and joined the group directly in Romania. Once settled in Bucharest, they began a series of performances that surely left an impact on the national delegation, as they were faced with large-scale stages. They are believed to have had around 12 performances in 8 different venues, each with audiences of roughly 3,000 people (Castañeda, 1996:3). They were also deeply impressed by the folklore of other countries, especially that of Romania, which was likely of the highest caliber. Castañeda also recalls being struck by the Russian Ballet, particularly the young performers, some only 9 or 10 years old.

Their performance concluded with two *sones chapines*: *El Grito* by Everardo de León Cifuentes and *Chichicaste* by Higinio Ovalle. These were danced by Antonio Crespo, Roberto Castañeda, and Marina Durán (now living in Costa Rica) (1997:3). The choreographies were very well received by the audience. After the performances, they were congratulated by beautiful aides who gave them flowers and a kiss on the cheek (something that also left an impression on Castañeda). On this matter, it's worth noting that it was Castañeda and Crespo, the young men, who experienced a romantic illusion, while, as might be expected, the

gentlemen of the marimba group "seemed to be flirted with by some of the women; in other words, the marimba players behaved very respectfully toward the women (1996:4)." I've heard from other Guatemalans who traveled to socialist countries that they were also impressed by these women, often making comments that border on the sexist.

Regarding their costumes, he notes: "...they were a bit mixed, because we didn't have a specific dance that matched the outfit; rather, it was a folkloric performance we came up with



Photo of the ensemble, gifted by E. del Cid. 01.01.89 "To my friends — maestros of maestros — my deepest respect."

ourselves, blending elements from two or three dances, more or less, that suited the costume. And it was just the three of us, so we couldn't put on a major show. Besides, we were very young and didn't yet have the full knowledge of choreography or folkloric research needed to create a high-level piece" (Castañeda: 1996:3).

While working on an essay, we come across the following anecdote:

"The head of the delegation asked us if we knew a purely Romanian national melody called La Internacional, which is essentially a kind of anthem. We told him that we didn't, simply because that music doesn't reach Guatemala. Then they asked us if we were musicians who could read sheet music, and we said yes. So, they told us, 'We'll bring you the score so you can learn it.' And sure enough, they brought a magazine that included a sheet music. The music was simple, so within about half an hour, we had it ready to play" (Barrera: 1997:2,3). This song was played by all the delegations as a prelude to their performances, and so they did as well. By a twist of fate, the ensemble founded by a dictator, the same one that, after

the revolution, would continue to entertain dictators—found itself now performing the iconic anthem of the Socialist International. The audience, according to reports, was astonished by the instrument's sound quality, with many assuming it must have had some kind of electric amplification to produce such resonance.⁹ Due to the colorful costumes, they were often photographed, and one of these pictures was even published in the festival magazine. There's no doubt it was a trip full of surprises that left a deep impression on the members of the group. They went to many parties, traveled to the Black Sea, where they ate caviar as if it were pork rinds, and drank vodka like water, along with plenty of local beers.

Like the rest of the delegations, they had a sort of ID card that allowed them to travel and eat wherever they wanted. They recalled giving some gifts to a French restaurant they often visited. Eventually, they learned that their performances had been very well received, mainly because the instrument they played was unfamiliar to European audiences.

The farewell took place in a former palace of King Carol of Romania, which at the time had already been converted into a Pioneer School. There, students received specialized training in various trades. When it was time to leave, they had to wait an extra week, as the trains were completely full (Barrera: 1997).

Upon leaving Romania, the dancer Marina Durán stayed behind, as she had another tour scheduled. Roberto Castañeda was entrusted with the responsibility of leading the ensemble to Austria. It was a difficult time, and the city was still divided due to post-war tensions among the major powers. It was at the Youth Office there that they were to receive the tickets for their return by ship. After several bureaucratic steps, they finally managed to travel to Vienna by train, a form of transportation that left them deeply impressed due to its size, stability, and efficiency. Continuing with the anecdotes: during the journey, they decided to eat and have a few drinks. Unfortunately, when it came time to pay, they realized they had miscalculated the cost and couldn't afford the bill. Fortunately, when they crossed the border, the currency exchange worked in their favor, allowing them to cover the bill (Castañeda: 1996:6). At the Guatemalan Embassy in Vienna, they were waiting to renew

⁹ Tánchez comments on this: "In Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, people believed that the masterful performers had electronic devices hidden in their wrists, given the skill and versatility of their playing. Everardo de León rolled up his sleeves and removed his cuffs to prove that it was pure talent that made the difference" (109, n.d.).



their passports. The ones they carried were filled with stamps and references to their entries into socialist countries, and since they would be returning through Spain and Cuba, it was better to renew them. This process gave them the opportunity to enjoy the embassy's hospitality and to visit Zurich and Basel. Eventually, they departed for Paris (Castañeda: 1996:7). There, according to Castañeda, some members of the group got lost more than once, and he had to go looking for them. They were received by the Guatemalan ambassador, Miguel Ángel Asturias, a host they remember fondly. However, these dates do not align with historical records, as his appointment to this position would come years later.

Before their departure, they noticed that only the large marimba was at customs, and the rest of the instruments, drums, violin, and the small marimba, which had all been shipped together, were missing. After a long, almost detective-like search through several customs stations, the instruments were eventually found, except for the small marimba. *"We had to leave without it... later I was told that the small marimba had accidentally been sent to Poland; and that afterward, it ended up in a museum. No one really knows what happened, although much later, I was informed that the marimba had reached somewhere in the United States of America. In the end, it turned up, and it's been back in Guatemala for quite some time now"* (Castañeda: 1996:8).¹⁰

They departed on a ship called *Reina del Pacífico*, and during a stop in Santander, they managed to spend the remainder of their European money, as it couldn't be exchanged elsewhere. Out at sea, since many Central Americans and Mexicans were aboard, they celebrated their respective Independence Days. Although they were traveling in Class C, the most economical, the service was very good. They shared the journey with other delegations from Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico. During the voyage, they celebrated September 15th, the national holiday for Central Americans, and September 16th, for the Mexicans. They deeply regretted not having their marimba with them on this leg of the trip, unlike their voyage between Spain and Italy on the ship *Antomatto Uso Dimary*, where they had played their instrument on several occasions (as confirmed by a photograph) (Barrera: 1997:5).

Everything had been going well, and they entered Cuba without issue, as their passports were in order. Unfortunately, the CIA had already learned about their journey behind the Iron Curtain and assumed that anyone who had traveled there must be communist. As a result, they were all imprisoned. Thanks to the intervention of the Guatemalan ambassador, they were released. However, for Batista's police, they remained marked as "reds," and they were only allowed to stay in the country for four days. From there, they took a plane

that took them to Guatemala via El Salvador. Barrera, for his part, mentions that they stayed a few more days before beginning their return. Due to the lack of space on the flights, it was suggested they return in groups of three, but they refused. Eventually, the conditions were right, and so they returned on a Pan American flight.

Before ending the interview, Castañeda says he wishes he could talk more about the marimba players, but he can't even remember their names. About Higinio, he says he had the most youthful spirit of all, despite his age: "he was already quite grown-up, but very friendly, and almost kind of a victim of all our jokes because he was the simplest, most humble person. Among us, we had a great time and were very happy, and so were the other marimba players, from the drummer to the cellist and the other members, very serious people, very pleasant. We got along really well with each one of them. They were my friends during the time they were alive, and we remembered all of that with great joy. The one I remember most is Don Higinio, who, even though there was quite an age difference between us, it was like we had been close friends for a long time, and we had a great time together." (1996:8)

Presidential presentations



Among the most notable events are those in which they performed within the framework of international diplomatic protocol, especially before presidents of other countries. As mentioned earlier, they performed at the White House in 1942. In 1961, Dominican President Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina awarded them a commemorative plate following their performance. Five years later, in 1966, Mexican President Lic. Gustavo Díaz Ordaz presented them with a gold medal after their recital at the presidential residence, Los Pinos. That same year, they traveled to Miami, where they received a Certificate of Appreciation from the organizers of the Festival of the Americas in Miami, United States of America. Later, they were awarded the Distinguished Guest Diploma by the Municipality



¹⁰ Apparently, this instrument ended up in the municipality of Salamá, Baja Verapaz.



Members of the ensemble performed for the diplomatic corps in the hallways of the presidential house (1983).

of New Orleans, United States of America, as well as a Special Guest Diploma from the A.S.T.A., a cultural organization in the United States, and another Special Guest Diploma from Wesdale Junior High School in New Orleans.

On the national stage, the ensemble had become something of an entertainer at receptions for the sitting Guatemalan presidents, in addition to fulfilling the roles we have previously highlighted. This is evidenced in the photographic archive of the ensemble performing before presidents such as Carlos Arana Osorio, Romeo Lucas, Vinicio Cerezo, Jorge Serrano Elías, and Ramiro de León Carpio, as well as during presentations before the diplomatic corps accredited in Guatemala.

that year (1994), they traveled to Costa Rica, continuing their presidential engagements, this time to accompany the inauguration of José Figueres on May 10th and 11th. Two months later, they did the same in El Salvador for the inauguration of Armando Calderón Sol. That same year, each member of the marimba received the Monja Blanca Diploma and Second-Class Medal, as well as a recognition from the Ministry of Defense, awarded by the President of the Republic, Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio, through a Governmental Agreement dated September 12. They also received a diploma from the Committee for the National Independence Celebrations. We also know that they performed at the Presidential House of Honduras, although we have not been able to determine the exact date. Additionally, they gave a performance during the visit of Pope John Paul II.



Assignment of the ensemble to the *Estado Mayor Presidencial* (EMP, by its initials in Spanish)



We do not know whether the reason was bureaucratic or simply a whim of the ruler, but the fact is that on December 18, 1971, by order of the then President of the Republic, General Carlos Arana Osorio, this marimba ensemble, along with its performing personnel, was officially attached to the *Estado Mayor Presidencial* (EMP). The transfer was carried out and the group was definitively assigned to the EMP, according to Appointment Agreement No. 3, dated January 15, 1973.

50th Anniversary



In 1984, the year of the golden anniversary celebration, the ensemble was formed by Arturo Barrera Minera as director, Mario Tactic, Rigoberto Flores Mena, José Betancourt Santa Cruz (double bass), Leopoldo Rodas Santizo, Mario Mirón Jiménez, José Claudio Rosales Avedaño, Justo Israel Callejas Ramírez, and Luis Augusto Montúfar Estrada (drums). Among the telegrams received for this event were those from Francisco Pereira González, Governor of Escuintla (30. 1984), and Oscar Velásquez, Marco Aurelio González, dated November 19.¹¹

For this reason, a Mass will be held at the Metropolitan Cathedral, officiated by Archbishop Monsignor Próspero Penados, on November 9 at 8:00 a.m. Among those who acknowledged the invitation to the religious service are Héctor Augusto Rosales Salaverría, Head of the Department of Information and Public Relations of the Army, and Robert Archila. Likewise, there is a note from Maestro Lester Godínez (dated 11/05/84), who extended an invitation to the tribute that will be held in their honor at the National School of Plastic Arts.¹² The invitation is also expected to be extended to



¹¹ Molina Nannini, Fernando, wrote a column dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Marimba *Maderas de Mi Tierra* in *El Imparcial* newspaper on September 21, 1984.

¹² In a *Prensa Libre* article from November 1984, a tribute organized by the General Directorate of Culture and Fine Arts was announced, during which the "Tsio-ti" award would be presented to Maestro Joaquín Orellana. Over 60 musicians were expected to participate in the event, performing on the renowned maestro's sound-producing instruments. See *TELÓN*, November 4, 1984, *Prensa Libre*.

maestros Benedicto Ovalle and Everardo de León.

Two years later, among their correspondence is a letter from the then Minister of Education, Eduardo Meyer (dated July 6, 1987, ref: S/ser.otdz.), expressing his gratitude for their participation in the Marimba Festival held in honor of Juan José Arévalo, which took place at the National Theater on June 22, 1987. In the same note, he mentions being a great admirer of marimba art and shares that, during his time as rector, he acquired a marimba. He also notes that while in San Marcos, he and Hilda de Meyer were gifted two pieces, and he enclosed the sheet music in case they wish to include them in their repertoire.

The Passing of the Greats, the Farewell to an Era



Starting in 1976, the group experienced the loss of several important members. That year, Maestro Joaquín Rodríguez passed away. In 1981, Higinio Ovalle Betancourt (who was serving as director) died, followed by Eustorgio Ovalle Betancourt in 1982, and Everardo de León in 1984. They were succeeded by Maestros Rigoberto Flores Mena, Leopoldo Rodas Santizo, Mario Mirón Jiménez, and Justo Israel Callejas Ramírez, respectively. Upon the passing of Maestro de León, the directorship of the ensemble was taken over by Maestro Arturo Barrera Minera, the same year that marked the 50th anniversary of the group's founding. Sadly, the distinguished maestros we've mentioned were no longer present to witness that milestone celebration. In the years that followed, retirements continued, thankfully, not due to the same somber reasons. In 1985, Benedicto Ovalle Betancourt retired after 40 years of service, followed two years later by Leopoldo Rodas Santizo. Both were exceptional and highly respected maestros. They were succeeded by José Claudio Rosales Avedaño and Guillermo de León Ruiz. In 1988, Augusto Montúfar (drummer) passed away, followed the next year by José Betancourt Santa Cruz (violinist). Their places were taken by Daniel Zamora Melgar and Mario Fajardo Contreras. These were great losses, fortunately, the ensemble found capable successors. But within the spirit of an era, that of the *Marimba Maderas de Mi Tierra*, they remain irreplaceable.

Upon the retirement of Arturo Barrera Minera in 1991, his position was filled by Germán García Gómez, and the directorship was assumed by Maestro Mario Tactic. But as with every cycle—this one now seems more like a special chapter nearing its end, as cycles grow shorter, further changes come. In 1992, Mario Efraín Quevedo García and José Claudio Rosales Avedaño retired. Erick Armando Vargas Ortiz

replaced the former. The following year brought more changes: Mario Tactic stepped down, and the directorship was taken over by Rigoberto Flores Mena. That same year, Nazario Rucal Xunic and Elpidio Abelardo Cano Alvarado joined the ensemble. The next year, Guillermo de León Ruiz bid farewell, with his position filled by Rómulo Pérez Pérez.

More Honors and Awards

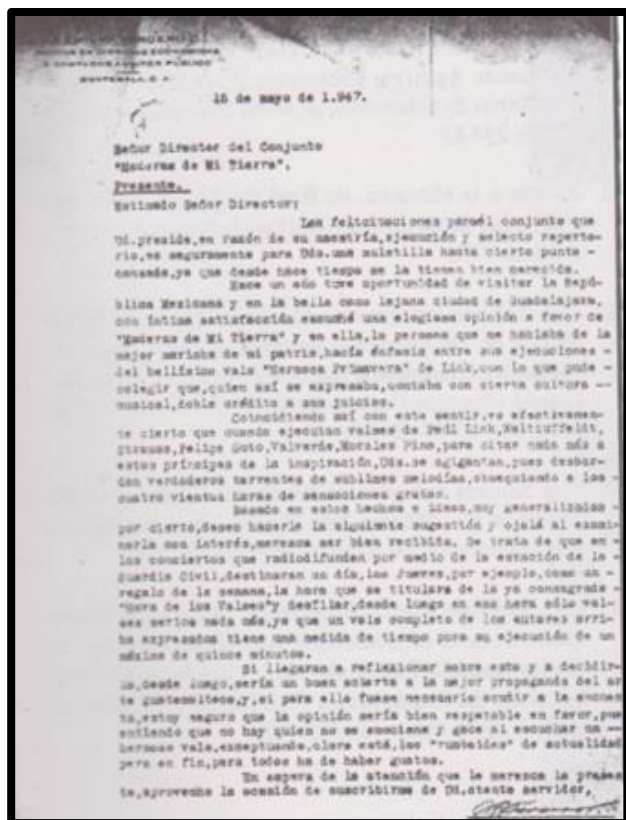
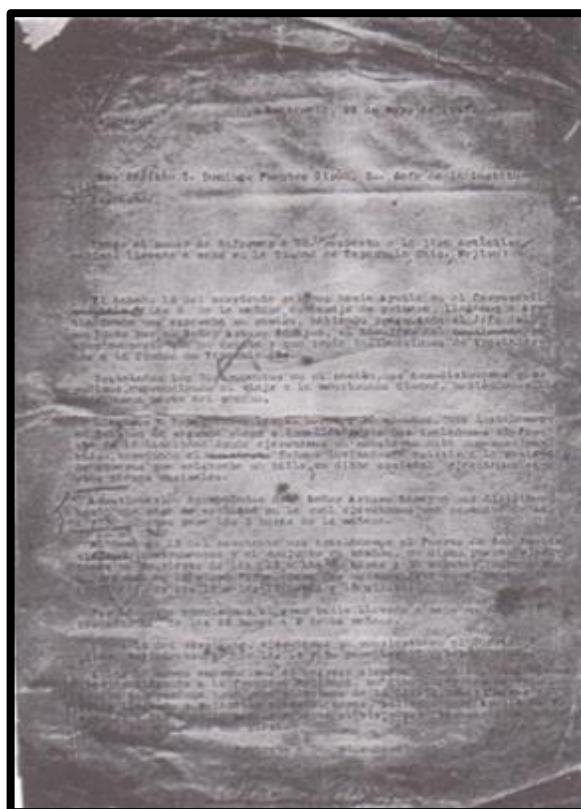
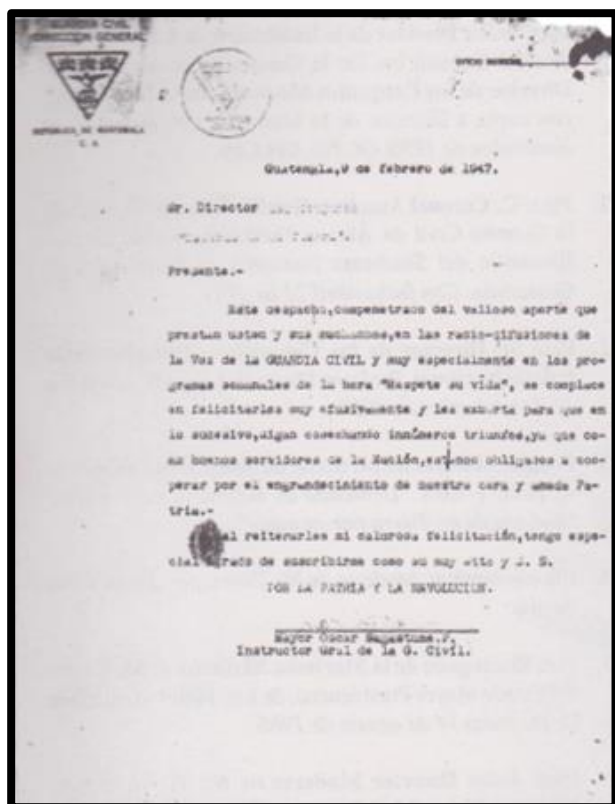


Relying on *La Breve* (1995), we highlight the following honors: In 1975, a Certificate of Recognition from Mariano Gálvez University; In 1980, a Certificate of Recognition from CONACO, INACOP, CONFECOOP, and Non-Federated Cooperatives; In 1983, a Certificate of Honor for Merit from the Chief of the General Staff of the Head of State; In 1984, the placement of a plaque on the instrument *Maderas de Mi Tierra* and a Certificate of Honor for Merit on the occasion of the ensemble's Golden Jubilee. That same year, a certificate from the General Directorate of Fine Arts, a commemorative plaque from the Institute of Adult High School, and a diploma from the I.B.P.M. In 1986, a Certificate of Recognition from the First Lady of the Nation, Raquel Blandón de Cerezo. A year later, after a masterful performance, a Recognition Plate from the XV International Cervantine Festival, Guanajuato, Mexico. In 1988, for the Golden Jubilee of the marimba *La Voz de los Altos*, the Honorable Municipal Corporation of Quetzaltenango awarded a Certificate of Recognition. In 1990, a Certificate of Honor for Merit from the General Directorate of University Extension, University Cultural Center, and the Concert Marimba of USAC. In 1991, a Certificate of Recognition from the Concert Marimba of Fine Arts and a Certificate of Recognition from the XI Marimba Festival, part of the Permanent Cultural Program of the Paiz Foundation. In 1992, a commemorative plaque from the Permanent Committee for National Independence Celebrations. In 1994, a Certificate from the Committee for National Independence Celebrations.

Farewell to a Great Ensemble



In 1994, the members of the ensemble — Rigoberto Flores Mena (director), Justo Israel Callejas Ramírez, Nazario Rucal Xunic, Rómulo Pérez Pérez, Mario Eduardo Fajardo Contreras, Germán García Gómez, Eric Armando Vargas Ortiz, Elpidio Abelardo Cano Alvarado, and Daniel Zamora Melgar (Drums), received an award. A year later, on the ensemble's 60th anniversary (the reason for the award), they were presented with the *Monja Blanca* Medal, Second Class.



Bibliography



Arrivillaga Cortés, Alfonso. *Historia Social de la Marimba. En Tradiciones de Guatemala*. 1996. CEFOL-USAC.

_____. *Marimbas, Bandas y Conjuntos Orquestales del Petén*. La Tradición Popular. No. 98. CEFOL-USAC.

Interviews

Barrera Minera, Arturo. *Narrative of the Marimba Maderas de Mi Tierra's Trip to Romania in 1953*. (1997)

Roberto Castañeda. *Narrative of the Marimba Maderas de Mi Tierra's Trip to Europe in 1953*. (1996)

Documents

Breve Historia del Conjunto de Marimba "Maderas de Mi Tierra". October 19, 1984.

Official Documents, Correspondence, Programs, and Other Notes:

1. To: **Captain C. Domingo Fuentes Girón**, 3rd-in-Command of the Institution. From: **Manuel Herrera Pineda** (on behalf of the ensemble leader). Date: May 22, 1945. File: Official correspondence, Archive 4, Outgoing.
2. Note dated November 17, 1945.
3. To: **Director of the ensemble Maderas de Mi Tierra**. From: **Major Oscar Sagastume P.**, General Instructor of the Civil Guard. Date: February 9, 1947. Note: No reference number on the official correspondence.
4. To: **Director of Maderas de Mi Tierra**. From: **J. Emilio Tercero C.** Dated on May 15, 1947.
5. *Program* dated December 11, 1947.
6. To: **Faustino Ovalle**, Director of the ensemble *Maderas de Mi Tierra*. From: **Carlos H. Peñate G.** and **Oscar F. Chinchilla Bosque**. Date: May 25, 1984. Sender's address: Callejón Escuintilla No. 11.
7. **Receipt**: Document from the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit of the Republic of Guatemala. Registry dated: August 26, 1949
8. To: **Major Domingo Fuentes G.**, Deputy Director of the Civil Guard (*General Directorate, as stated in the letterhead*) From: **José Faustino Valle V.**, Director of the Ensemble Date: November 22, 1950.
9. To: **Director of the Musical Ensemble Maderas de Mi Tierra**. From: **Armando Gálvez Castro**, Secretary General. Date: November 23, 1950.

10. To: **Director of the Institution**. From: **Castro F.**, Acting Deputy General Director of the Civil Guard. To: **Director of the Institution's Musical Ensembles**. CC: Director of the Marimba. Date: November 27, 1950. Ref.: Official Letter No. 649.Cab.
11. To: **Colonel Anselmo Getellá**, General Director of the Civil Guard. From: **Álvaro Contreras Vélez**, Executive Committee, National Union of Journalists of Guatemala. Date: April 21, 1951.
12. To: **Director of the National Police Musical Ensembles**. From: Professor Mario H. Lobos B.. Date: November 16, 1959.
13. **Poem: Maderas de Mi Tierra**. By: **Jorge Cruz Sáenz**, handwritten. Note: "Dedicated to the masterful ensemble *Maderas de Mi Tierra*, by its author."
14. **Blues-Song: Maderas de Mi Tierra**. By: **Jorge Cruz Sáenz**.
15. To: **Head of the Maderas de Mi Tierra Marimba**, Presidential General Staff. From: Eng. **Isidoro González H.**. Date: August 14, 1986.
16. To: **Director of Maderas de Mi Tierra**. From: Dr. **Eduardo Meyer M.**, Minister of Education. Date: July 6, 1987. Ref.: S/reg.otdz.
17. **Report: Official Commission** of the *Maderas de Mi Tierra* Marimba of the Presidential General Staff to Mexico. Dates of Tour: September 8–19, 1987. Date of Report: September 21, 1987.
18. **Order: Presidential General Staff Command**. Order No.: 309. Date: November 5, 1987.
19. To: **Maestro Arturo Barrera Minera**. From: **Héctor Cifuentes Aguirre**, President of the Association of Journalists of Guatemala. Date: May 26, 1988. Ref.: Official Letter No. 238-88.
20. **Poem to the Marimba**. By: **Raúl Guillermo Mollinedo Calderón**, retired officer of the National Police. Date: June 1995.
21. To: **Members of the Maderas de Mi Tierra Marimba** From: **Dr. Fernando Beltranena Valladares** and **Dr. Alejandro Giammattei**, President and Vice President of the Guatemalan Olympic Committee. Date: March 25, 1996. Ref.: 00-56-96-COC-O.
22. To: **Members of the Maderas de Mi Tierra Marimba**. From: Lic. **Marimba Yela García**, Director of Escuela Virgen. Poderosa. Date: May 7, 1996.
23. To: **Master Sergeant Specialist Rigoberto Flores Mena**, Director of the *Maderas de Mi Tierra* Marimba. From: **Carlos Antonio Lainfiesta Soto**, Corvette Captain, Secretary of the Presidential General Staff. Date: June 4, 1996. Ref.: Official Letter No. 557/1010.



Avenida La Reforma
0-09, zona 10 Tel/fax:
331-9171 y 361-9260

Director

Celso A. Lara Figueroa

Direction Assistant

Arturo Matas Oria

Full researchers

Celso A. Lara Figueroa

Alfonso Arrivillaga Cortés

Carlos René García Escobar

Aracely Esquivel Vásquez

Artemis Torres Valenzuela

Musicologist researcher

Enrique Anleu Díaz

Interim researchers

José Chaclán

Aníbal Chajón

Research Assistants

Deyvid Paul Molina

Xóchitl Anaité Castro Ramos

Audiovisual media

Jairo Gamaliel Cholutío Corea

Editing and Publishing

Guillermo Alfredo Vásquez González

Documentation center

Miguel Esau Girón Hernández

Cover and Interior Design

Melisa Larín y Olga Venegas

Interior Layout and Cover Assembly

Jairo Homero Solares Rodríguez

Cover Illustration

Enrique Anleu Díaz

Photography

Colección Casa Laraduna