

El Changüí, origen y persistencia tradicional ***Changüí, origin and traditional persistence***

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Resumen

En el trabajo se versa sobre el insuficiente conocimiento del Changüí y sus orígenes. Profundizar en estos, en su esencia y persistencia en la tradición del pueblo yaterano, es un imperativo. Para esto se emplearon métodos teóricos y empíricos, los que permitieron sistematizar aportes brindados por investigadores del tema, identificar las carencias, profundizar en la teoría y obtención de información fáctica, así como precisar la evolución histórica del objeto de investigación. Se ahondó en los conocimientos de las tradiciones changuiceras, peculiaridades musicales, así como la perdurabilidad de agrupaciones y músicos que lo han mantenido y defendido como sentido de identidad y persistencia de la tradición de un pueblo desde lo socio comunitario, arraigado en la cultura yaterana. Además de patentizar que es un género autóctono, desempeña un rol esencial con particularidades campesinas que lo hacen independiente.

Palabras clave: Changüí; Música; Identidad; Cultura.

Abstract

The work deals with the insufficient knowledge of the Changüí and its origins in Yateras. It is intended to deepen on these and their persistence in the tradition of this town. For this, some methods were used as historical-logical, analysis-synthesis, inductive-deductive, testimony interview, documentary analysis and study of historical sources. They made possible to systematize contributions provided by researchers on the subject, to identify gaps, to deep into theory and to obtain information, as well as to specify the historical evolution of the research object. The knowledge of the changuiceras traditions,

its musical peculiarities, as well as the durability of groups and musicians, that have maintained and defended it as a sense of identity and persistence of the tradition of people from the socio-community rooted in the Yaterana culture was delved into. In addition, at demonstrating that it is an autochthonous genre, it plays an essential role with peasant characteristics that make it independent.

Keywords: Changüí; Music; Identity; Culture.

Introduction

The Changüí is inserted as an active element in the artistic traditional popular music of the Guantanamero people, it has its own peculiarities that distinguish it as the primary form of the son, and it is a traditional rural music that, for its transcendence has been declared as Cultural Patrimony of the Nation. The way it is played in the territory of Yateras is unique, that is why its possible origins are attributed to this area.

The manifestation of the rhythm, its dance and the other elements that characterize and accompany the tradition, related to the changüí have remained intact since its beginnings and is defended by its inhabitants with their own aesthetic taste and expression.

The Changüí has been the subject of studies by various researchers, including (Estonel, 2014; Guanche and Mejuto, 2008; Hernández, 2010; Linares, 2014), who attribute its origins to the hills of the Guantanamo highlands. These authors provide general elements that concern the Guantánamo province; however, their precision is limited with respect to the contribution of the Yateras municipality. Meanwhile, García et al. (2011), make important attributions of the emergence to the latter territory in their research; hence, there is a disjunctive between the aforementioned researchers.

The present work, by working on the background of the changüíera tradition, its characteristics, the durability of groups and musicians, the sense of identity and belonging through a set of testimonies of the protagonists of this genre, will facilitate greater knowledge of its original issues. Likewise, it favors the compilation of bibliographic information that nourishes the sociocultural knowledge and enriches the cultural heritage of the population. On the other hand, it will provide identity elements that will bring to the public's attention issues that can be used to provide continuity to subsequent research.

Therefore, the fundamental achievements of the Changüí are highlighted, in the same measure in which it has evolved in all the orders of the social and cultural life of this people, its impact in the future generations for their cultural and identity formation.

It also provides characteristic elements of the tradition in the territory and its coherence with the national and stimulates the inquiry to determine other elements and personalities that have contributed to the enrichment of the culture in the municipality and in the country. The study is also nourished by

the historiography of the subject and is inserted in this to strengthen the bases that imply greater love for genres that participate in the origin and growth of the national culture.

However, the recognition as an autochthonous and traditional Yateri genre in its origins has been scarce, induced by geographic issues and limited research related to the beginning of this genre in this territory, being among the studies that have contributed most to the subject related to this context Medina et al. (2011), those that express:

An example of one of those musical genres autochthonous to a territory is the Changüí, originally from the Yateranas hills in the middle of the Guantanamo highlands, maintained and updated to the same extent that our country has evolved in all aspects of life (i.e., economy and society). Therefore, the insufficient knowledge of the genesis of Changüí in Yateras is specified as a problem of this research (p. 1).

Therefore, the objective is aimed at deepening the knowledge of the Changüí, its origin, development and persistence in the tradition of the Yateras people.

Development

One of the most complicated points in the study of cultures is its relationship with the identity of the people through the practice of their customs and festivities, which is valued as a reservoir of cultural identity, and seeks to protect and preserve it. In this musical context, the Changüí is a genre that constitutes one of the artistic and autochthonous elements in which the popular art of the rural people of Guantanamo is manifested.

The Changüí constitutes not only a very specific kind of music, but it is also a way of popular inter-family celebration with singular features in the melodic and rhythmic patterns and its accentuations that define its grammar and musical articulations.

The Changüí is a traditional peasant music that, due to its transcendence, on December 20, 2018 was declared Cultural Heritage of the Cuban Nation, it is natural of the rural area of Guantanamo, and it has its own peculiarities that distinguish it within the son.

Thus, several authors have used the word Changüí, for example, Giro (2007), defines it as "(...) a jargon word of uncertain origin", "...old dance of ordinary people" (p.22), while Ortiz (1996) refers that: "(...) the meaning may come from the verb congo, zanga, and besides dancing it means jumping, joy, triumph and changüí will be the denomination of enjoyment, of joy with which the different authors introduce it" (p.45).

For his part, musicologist D. Orozco (personal communication, August 12, 2014), noted that:

(...) it is not plausible to place a concrete, unique date as to the definition of one or another music of this type, since it is related... to different singers and dancers in general that established a transition period..., however, throughout the 19th century there are strong indications about the presence of singers and dancers of this transition music, which from approximately 1860 (perhaps earlier), influenced both the soneros and the changüiseros.

However, its evolution has demonstrated the transcendence until the present times in which the traditional rhythmic manifestations follow the course of the popular. In this particular case, some more contemporary issues related to the songs and tonalities are inserted. However, the instrumentation, according to the researchers studied, continues without variation, especially in the areas of the municipality of Yateras.

It is also possible to appreciate, in diverse criteria of cited authors, the recognition that groups of genre mix their music with expressions of the changüí. This demonstrates the defense of Cuban culture to the utmost. It is worth, therefore, that the territory in which the research is developed reinforces the inquiries, with the purpose of increasing the defense of its own roots.

In the same way, it refers that:

It is a genre that affects an expression of strong popular roots and notorious interactive participation between players, versifiers and dancers, very unique features in the melodic-rhythmic patterns, accentuations and distributions that define its grammar and musical articulation, special musical-danceable, festive and versifying strength.

In coincidence with what is stated in the previous paragraph, the observations of the researchers, supported by years of experience in scientific and cultural meetings, have made it possible to verify this idea as latent at present. On the other hand, the creative sense of the musicians is rooted in the new improvisations included in the musical numbers.

The musicologist Orovio (1992), expressed:

The sonera variant that took root in the land of Guantanamo has been called changüí. It is, without a doubt, the original form of the montuno genre. The word designates dance, party, so that when one invites to a changüí that surrounds the city of guaso, one is [...] summoning to a family amusement that includes song, music, dance, food and drink in the hills. (p.15)

In attention to what the researcher states in the previous paragraph, at present there have been variations that are mainly due to the conversion of the genre to the modality of music to listen to, which is preferred by some inhabitants of the referred territory. It has also been considered its presentation in public acts and in popular events such as carnivals and other celebrations. Likewise, the Changüí

Festival is held annually in the capital city of Guantánamo province and sub-seat in the municipality of Yateras.

Hence, Guanche and Mejuto (2008) point out that Changüí is:

(...) one of the modalities of the complex son, typical of the eastern provinces. The term is used to identify a musical genre that is similar in form to the son montuno, but with an improvisation of the bongoes, which makes the rhythm much more complex and faster. Floreos are performed with the feet and there is a greater spatial displacement with the predominance of turns, so it requires less marked steps. Its mobility gives dynamism to the development of the party (p.23).

In the opinion of the authors, the aforementioned is closely related to the way of dancing in the area where the research was carried out, even though the bongoes and others, guide many dancers by the tres, but with more cadence.

On the other hand, Hernández (2010), alleges that,

The movement of the changüí is marked by the steps of the conga dance and its members, in full. They interpret both pulla songs and challenging rumbas and even fragments of choruses of fashionable songs, regardless of the musical genre of origin. (p.96)

It can be said that in Yateras it is not used as a conga, but as a family dance, where its songs are directed to women, social events and significant dates. Its use in public squares has made it possible to better disseminate this subgenre and at the same time has made it easier for its followers to enjoy it in a wider scenario than just the family. This implies that the use of larger areas for the expression of this music makes it more listened to by the public, which generally shows its adhesion to the moving rhythm that is very popular in these places.

It is significant for the yaterano, the presentation of the referred genre in television programs, radio or other media. This reinforces his identity as an inhabitant of the territory in question. It is an expression of their culture, of their identity traits.

Consequently, culture and identity of those who were born together with the very birth of the region as an inhabitable area and that has been evolving as its own people evolve. It is worth adding the resignification given by the people who are from the territory and perform a public representation of the dance in question. It is evident, although it is not solemn, how they give it a high solemnity as a manifestation of the appreciation that the lovers of this musical expression have for it.

These elements can be enriched with new and varied research, which should focus more on the affective relationship between the listeners and the music, among the dancers themselves and on the importance that the amateurs attach to it.

Hernandez (2010) also states that:

This genre and other musical traditions, when merged were links for the expression of traditions; the singing of Changüí usually repeats phrases that, according to the moment of displacement, follow different, variable semantizations. The circumstances, and the own emotionality of the members of the choir; determine that this principle of making a phrase of different connotation is fulfilled. (p.196)

Therefore, the authors agree with the above mentioned, since the lyrics are short and the paraphrasing allows to lengthen the musical number. In Yateras it has been included by the groups that represent it, the lyrics of revolutionary patriotic meaning related to the general integral culture of the people who taste it. On the other hand, people chant the refrains of this type showing strong emotions that harmonize the artistic events where the musicians in question are presented.

On the other hand, Linares (2014), states that:

The changüí is a genre because it has its own elements and particularities, it is not dependent nor does it arise from the son. The changüí is changüí and the son is son, each one with its own form of expression...it is true that in the changüí there are the bongoes, the maraca, the guayo and the tres, instruments that we can see in other Cuban rhythms and genres, but the latter, which is not exclusive to this one, is, because of the way it is played, unique, distinctive, plays an essential role and establishes a counterpoint with the rest of the instruments, not so in other genres like the son. Furthermore, we cannot categorically say that the changüí emerged at the same time as the son because there is no evidence to prove it; it does have its own peasant characteristics that make it independent. (p.16)

It is worth mentioning that the union of different ethnic cultures in the Yateran territory influenced the word Changüí, which is related to the Arauca language present in the aboriginal language as güije, managüí, güira and güiro. In this case, the güira is used to make maracas and the güiro is used to make the musical instrument of the same name used in son and rural music.

The musician and researcher from Guantanamo, Inciarte (n.d), affirms that the most distant date of the existence of the changüí is 1868, when the Spanish soldiers took prisoner the Mambí colonel Policarpo Pineda, dancing changüí in the area of Tiguabos. Likewise, about that date, it makes reference to a black slave named Atina Latamblé, who was the great-grandmother of Chito Latamblé, a singer of the genre, and belonged to a farm called San Miguel in the vicinity of Yateras.

Taking into account the above, the geographical situation in which the region of Guantánamo was divided in the year 1886, the parties, given by a process of territorial ordering were two: Yateras and Tiguabos, in the year 1856 the municipal board that administered the interests of the Guantánamo

region, obeying orders received from the Captain General of the island, who considered excessive the number of quarters in which the territory was divided, agreed to reduce it. He did it creating two parties, to this effect: Yateras and Tiguabos, in this way Yateras was highlighted as an administrative unit within what then was not a municipality, but jurisdiction of Guantánamo.

The border between the territories of Yateras, Baracoa and Tiguabos, propitiated that people moved from one place to another and carried with them this type of music. The changüí parties were joined by those who came to the hills in search of work in the so-called dead times, starting in 1825 when the coffee boom and the sugar cane cuttings began.

In these celebrations, the slaves participated and were accompanied by musical instruments native to their lands, the ritual and festive music, farming instruments, saints, costumes, drumming and dancing as a fundamental element for body movement, drinking and singing as a complement to the festivity, when mixed it with other ethnic groups later became their own culture, on dates such as December 4, Santa Barbara Day, December 17, Saint Lazarus Day, December 24, Christmas Eve, December 25, Easter Day or birth of Jesus Christ, December 31, waiting for the end of the year or Christmas, January 6, Three Kings Day.

Although some researchers attribute to Yateras the paternity of the changüí, another group points to zones like the current municipalities of Manuel Tames that belonged to Yateras and El Salvador to Tiguabos, where the existence of this musical-dance genre is also known, which maintains links with the Nengón and the Quiribá due to the proximity and exchange of the cultures that were settling in the mountainous region of Guantánamo.

The way it is played in the territory of Yateras is unique, so it is attributed its possible origins, a culture influenced by different processes that have laid the substrate of a music that identifies a territory throughout its history. The deepening in the knowledge of the origins of the changüísera music allows visualizing the sense of belonging and identity through testimonies made to some protagonists, which show that the Changüí in that territory is kept alive and as a tradition.

The research focuses on a kind of music with singular features in melodic patterns, cadences and accentuations, as it is the case of the Changüí, as a montuno yaterano rhythm, it deepens in the knowledge of the cultural traditions of the population, especially of the changüísera music that has been identified with the contribution of other cultures.

The result was a fusion of cultures and traditions such as handicrafts, altar of the cross, bembé, peasant music, resulting in a musical genre that due to its instrumental components and customs has remained to this day as part of the identity of the Yaterano people, using as stages for these festivities the drying

places of numerous coffee plantations where the aboriginal, African, French, Hispanic, North American and Antillean roots have been transculturized and merged in a social and cultural development.

These customs became a necessity that developed throughout the territory, so that occasionally musicians, improvisers, singers, and others who showed off their musical virtues and improvised instruments such as (taburete replacing the acoustic sound of the bongoes, the guayo to scratch the cassava and corn, the botija made of güira or clay), interacting in a harmonic complex, forming parties, guateques that lasted up to several days, which allowed the formation of occasional musical groups, empirical giving origin to the components and formation of musical groups as such, where changüiseros that integrated the group Los Cocolisos stood out.

Of these changüiseros, E. Goulet, alias Pipi (personal communication, December 15, 2015) tells us that:

(...) they would go from one bohío to another bohío entertaining the compadres, "el compay", and the comadres; different musicians would get together, especially treseros who were the most abundant, and they would start to play, to sing, a bongosero, a guayero, another with a marimbula would arrive. Sometimes they would arrive by surprise and the changüí would begin. There was always drinking. An animal was killed, if it was a pig it was roasted on a spike, the women cooked vianda, rice, ajiaco, coffee was strained and there was no lack of sweets, the party was formed until dawn, moving to the site of the new guateque, the changüí told his joy and jacaranderos motives. The changüí began in the coffee plantations singing and improvising, until ending in the coffee dryers.

The above is evidence that these musicians moved throughout the territory along the stone roads that connected all the coffee plantations, that is, they moved from the coffee plantation Los Naranjos to the town of Felicidad, where the commercial and cultural centers were located, The social classes met at Garrido's bar, Lulú's Fonda, Darío's store, the social circle called El Quimbombó, Tato's and Quiqui's barbershop, Lulú's Cine Astral, the cockfence and other areas. This route continued through La Deseada to El Porvenir, where the party was held at Lola and Jabao's house, with Emilio González, Ángel Lescaille (Gelo), who played guayo, bongo and chorus, also communicated with El Infierno, La Cubana and El Jagüey.

These parties extended to Boquerón at the home of Alquilado Russó and Nuta, to Bella Vista at the home of the family of Carlos Trino and the Vela family, and to La Tagua at the home of a gentleman named Benigno Argothe, where they lasted several days.

Consequently, there were other sites identified with the chagüí where the musicians continued their journey, according to A. Pérez (personal communication, December 25, 2015), that in La Cueva, in the

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house of Didito and Susana, musicians from Guantánamo, such as Pedro Espec and Chito Latamblé, joined them.

These activities were carried out in other areas of the territory. Continuing to Monte Verde, San Andrés, and Guayabal in the Valla de Gallo and reaching La Cuabita up to the Sociedad de Blancos. They were formed mainly at the end of the coffee harvest.

On the other hand, drinks, singing and bustle could not miss, as a complement of these parties, there were always those who armed the usual brawls where Emilito González stood out, one of the famous handsome of Yateras, the one who when he arrived at the party ended it taking out the machete or the revolver, fame that was the inspiration of the musical number of the Duo Los Compadres "Se acabaron los guapos en Yateras" or "Ceros guapos en Yateras".

Musicians such as Arcadio Dubois, Juan Loga, José Chenco, Carlos Guibert de los Ángeles (Callé), Isidro Bogué (Abundio), Francisco Begué, José Isabel Soto Prevó (Che Prevó), Rogelio Lescaille, later joined by Raúl Lescaille (who made musical instruments), and others who were hired according to the type of activity to be carried out. They formed the first musical group of color called Los Cocolisos; they were named in this form, because they used to peel their hair as a sign of protest against the regime that prevailed from 1952 to 1959. It was the only colored group that performed in La Cuabita at the Sociedad de Blancos. Playing various genres such as guaracha, sones, danzones, boleros and Changüí.

In the course of this musical ensemble, some of its musicians formed groups or groups changüiseros with this genre already defined, maintaining a link in their performances.

With the cultural policy established by the Cuban revolutionary government, it is from 1975 that the instrumental structure of these groups changüiseras made a selection of essential and fundamental instruments such as the tres as a guide, maracas, marimbula, guayo and bongo, these were located in: Los Naranjos (Changüí los Naranjos), director Amado Cajigal; in Boquerón (Changüí Los Astros with members from Beltrán and Boquerón), director Che Prevó; in Virginia (Changüí de Virginia), director Evelio Ramirez; in El Porvenir (Changüí El Porvenir), director Isidro Begué.

Thus, all these social events laid the foundations for the municipality of Yateras to start implementing cultural programs in response to events and festivals of this genre. In 1983, the first edition of the Municipal Changüí Festival was held in the Felicidad Popular Council in the house of Eduardo Goulet Lestapier, known as Pipi, where the institution Casa del Changüí is located; A place that has served as a meeting place for changüiseras traditions and bearers of the territory, foreigners, where changüiseros from Guantánamo and other regions of national renown, enjoy the traditional of this land and the country music that invites the delight of a rhythmic, soft, rhythmic rhythm that characterizes the

genuineness of the country people, where they worship their defenders and defend the popular of a culture that is part of an identity.

Consequently, in the municipality of Yateras, the Municipal Changüí Festivals have been developed, and up to the present days, there have been XXXVIII editions with the participation of local and foreign invited groups.

In this sense, Yateras, within the Guantanamo's catalog has two groups that are protected by the Provincial Music Center. They are Estrellas Campesinas and El guajiro y su Changüí, which have represented the changüíseras traditions in different areas. Meanwhile, renowned personalities have defended the genre, with their deserved recognition, among which are Armando Rey Leliebre (Yu) tresero, Eduardo Goulet Lestapier (Pipi), Celso Fernandez Rojas, the latter, reginero, director, composer and arranger.

Many of these defenders of the genre have come to drink from the wisdom of the Changüí montuno, to which others have been added who have been able to take it to new national and international spheres; they affirm that Yateras is the cradle of Changüí. So, it is worth mentioning that Yateras is where this traditional music has had more splendor, and that groups carrying this genre and protected by the National Music Center as "Estrellas Campesinas" and "El Guajiro y su Changüí", have raised the Yateras culture in different scenarios providing a distinctive seal to the traditional, popular and cultural practices of the Guantanamera region.

It is valid to emphasize that the Changüí is defined by the lovers of the genre in (Changüí Monte or of field and Changüí de Ciudad because it came down to the city); in Yateras we find the changüí de monte, the purest; it has peculiarities and characteristics such as the musical instruments, the wardrobe and the dance, although it exhibits its own autonomy.

The musical instruments have a counter-time sound, given by the tres, the marimbula, the bongo, the guayo and the maracas, independently that sometimes other instruments are added in foreign groups with modernity; The dance in the traditional Changüí montuno is rhythmic, melodious, cadenced, it does not allow lifting the feet or making movements that alter the rhythm of the dancer, there is a difference between the way of dancing in the country and the city, each dancer looks for his own style, but there is only one way to dance it, movements can be made with the parts of the body, the feet should not be lifted from the floor, it is as if the vibrations of the musical instruments were concentrated on the floor.

As for the costumes, it is characteristic of the peasants, the use of guayaberas, dark or white pants, yarey hats, highlighting the elegance, and in the women long dresses or sayas; another aspect is to take a partner to the dance. These patterns are kept alive in these lands that for many years have maintained

this tradition, rescuing for the new generations a legacy of our ancestors. Some groups have dance partners, as is the case of Estrellas Campesinas.

The instruments are closely linked to the dance and costumes; musically the changüí is included within the son complex, which is considered a musical genre in itself. It corresponds to the three characteristic timbre planes of the son: complex, plucked string, harmonic bass and rhythmic base, the changüí is more syncopated and difficult than the son because the main instrument is the tres, its nomenclature is integrated by the singer who plays maraca and performs the lead voice, the group that sings, the tresero whose instrument is the only string instrument and is the guide, the marimbula (tumbantela, sansa) with an acoustic touch keeps time, the guayo, the bongoes de monte or criollo and the maracas play the syncopation of the first one, the voices do what the tres declaims to the peasant's voice and the timbal unloads its repiqueteo libremente, they almost all play against time in a kind of bargaining, its rhythm is different from that of the Son and much older.

The Changüí is framed in a socio-historical context that allows a greater fusion of different social classes, its compass of 2x4 with witty lyrics according to the singer's inspirations, the copla or the expression made by the members of the group in unison and the montuno, where a soloist takes the lead, performs the improvisations alternating with the chorus that corresponds to the refrain; other changüiseros stand out in the use of the Regina.

With respect to the Regina, formerly the coffee pickers encouraged the work in times of harvest intoning small couplets, the polemic was the main axis of the canturía, as entertainment for coffee growers, muleteers and other people engaged in agricultural activities, formed two groups, then at night they performed discharges, where the regineros stood out. It is one of the primary forms of singing in the Changüí and it is also a way of improvising in the son, taking as a base the cuarteta and the décima, the improvisation is the element that identifies it.

Nowadays, regineros have become popular. A very important criterion to take into account is the opinion of the director, composer, arranger, musician and singer C. Fernández (personal communication, December 24, 2014), one of the most recognized yaterano regineros, who states that: "changüí texts are sung to nature, women, love, the homeland, social events, and other topics".

So that the authors of this research see the Regina as the one that characterizes the Changüí montuno by the cadence of the rhythm taking into account the possibility that offers the changüisero to reginar or sing in verses; its conversational style, makes obligatory the presence of two or more regineros making the history patent when taking into account the call that was made in the coffee plantations; the competition based on the copla, which is the simplest form of improvisation, to which the décima has been incorporated, which is a source of delight for changüiseros guantanameros such as José Andrés

Rodríguez, Ariel Daudinó Brooks, Pedro Speck and Carlos Borromeo Planche (Cambrón), our most important regineros.

In the authors' opinion, this entire journey within the changüisera history allows to compile a series of information that serves as a basis for the socio-cultural knowledge in our municipality that remains as a latent source for the researchers of Yatán and enriches the cultural heritage of the population.

Conclusions

The research is carried out due to the need to deepen in the knowledge of the changüiseras traditions, musical-danceable genre of traditional character, its musical peculiarities, as well as the durability of groups and musicians who have maintained and defended it in order to internalize the sense of identity and persistence of the tradition of a people seen in the socio-community action rooted in the Yateran culture. The theoretical references show that the changüí is an autonomous genre, which plays an essential role and establishes, besides having its own peasant particularities that make it independent. It allowed compiling bibliographical information that nourishes the socio-cultural knowledge yaterano that enriches the cultural heritage of the population.

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