



LOS LLANEROS

STUDY GUIDE

ABOUT THE ARTISTS, pg. 1 of 2



Los Llaneros (yah-NEH-ros) specialize in the music of the Colombian/Venezuelan plains that surround the vast basin of the Orinoco River. These plains are called Llanos (YAH-nos). In addition to *llanero* music, Los Llaneros include music from other areas of Colombia and Venezuela in their concerts.

Los Llaneros means "People From The Llanos." The ensemble was founded in 1978 and consists of Karin Stein, Edgar East, and Daniel Rojas. All three artists have performed internationally for twenty to thirty years. Los Llaneros often tour with a fourth musician. Diego Mosquera will join them for their concerts in Des Moines.

Daniel Rojas

Daniel is from Colombia and he is the ensemble's harpist. Daniel is considered to be one of the young and rising stars of *llanero* harp music. Daniel launched the Florida-based "Harp and Folklore Foundation," which is designed to help the public appreciate the harps and folk music of Venezuela, Colombia, and Mexico.



- ◇ Harp
- ◇ Cuatro
- ◇ Tiple
- ◇ Vocals
- ◇ Capachos
- ◇ Tambora costeña
- ◇ Guacharaca

Edgar East

Edgar East is originally from Panama City, Panama. In addition to being part of Los Llaneros, he is also part of the Latin ensemble Calle Sur, directs the Afro-Latin Project, and performs Latin jazz, *salsa*, and world music. He has a degree in music education and taught band for 17 years prior to becoming a touring musician.



- ◇ Lead vocals
- ◇ Capachos
- ◇ Bass
- ◇ Gaita
- ◇ Quena
- ◇ Flute
- ◇ Tambora
- ◇ Maracón
- ◇ Tambor alegre
- ◇ Bombo
- ◇ Quitiplás

ABOUT THE ARTISTS, pg. 2 of 2



Karin Stein

Karin is from Colombia. She grew up as a cowgirl on a cattle and rice ranch in the Llanos and learned to keep her balance on a horse before she could walk. In addition to being the ensemble's lead vocalist and director, she is a composer, performs education outreach, and presents guest lectures at colleges and universities. When she is not touring, Karin now makes her home in Iowa and Costa Rica, the country where Los Llaneros were founded in 1978.



- ◇ Lead vocals
- ◇ Cuatro
- ◇ Guitar
- ◇ Gaita
- ◇ Quena
- ◇ Caña de millo
- ◇ Quitiplás
- ◇ Maracón

Diego Mosquera

Diego is also from Colombia. He works for the Colombian diplomatic service in the U.S., but back home he is well-known among *llanero* musicians for his extraordinary skills on the *capachos* (*llanero* maracas), with which he has won many maraca competitions. Diego continues to be active in music as his schedule permits, performing not only with Los Llaneros, but also with various Chicago-based Latin ensembles.



- ◇ Capachos
- ◇ Vocals
- ◇ Cuatro
- ◇ Furruco
- ◇ Maracón
- ◇ Tambor alegre
- ◇ Tambor llamador
- ◇ Quitiplás



Ed (center) as a teenager in Panama, playing the trumpet in his band, called "La Nueva Generación." (The New Generation)



Karin at 6 months, learning to balance on her horse, at the ranch where she grew up in Colombia.

TOP: Los Llaneros with their *llanero* cowboy instruments.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



LLANERO MUSIC

The musical specialty of Los Llaneros is the cowboy music of the Llanos (YAH-nos) or savannas of Colombia and Venezuela, typically played on the *llanero harp*, the *cuatro*, and the *capachos* (specialized maracas). This type of music is easy to enjoy thanks to its upbeat and melodic nature. Some songs are instrumental, highlighting the intricate and complicated rhythms and fast notes played on the three main instruments mentioned above. Some pieces will include vocals sung in Spanish, and a brief explanation will be given about these songs.

Authentic *llanero* music is rarely performed outside of the savannas because of its difficult harp, *cuatro*, and percussion techniques. As a result, *llanero* music is one of Latin America's least known treasures!

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

It is important to Los Llaneros to illustrate the great diversity of cultures that exists in Colombia and Venezuela, which of course is expressed in the music of the two countries as well. Therefore, Los Llaneros will include songs from regions that are far away from the Llanos, such as Andean music (from the Andes Mountains of Colombia), and coastal music (from the Atlantic coast of both countries).

The coastal music from the Atlantic coast is heavily influenced by African music brought by the slaves in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Llanero music, by contrast, is heavily influenced by Spanish and Arabic musical forms brought to the Americas in the same time period, and it has evolved to create its own distinctive sound.

Andean music in Colombia is a mixture of Native American and Spanish musical forms and instruments.

JOIN IN

The audience will see and hear a large variety of instruments being performed, and there will be opportunities for the audience to sing along, or to help keep a beat by clapping.

TALK ABOUT IT

Los Llaneros hope that their show will generate interesting discussions between students and teachers, not only about the Llanos and *llanero* music, but especially about diversity existing alongside human interconnectedness. The performers themselves – all of them Latin American – represent the broad range of ethnicities that have converged in Latin America. The many instruments they play are another expression of diversity. And yet, they share in common with any culture of the world the love of music, and with the United States specifically, the existence of a strong cowboy tradition.

TOP: Ed East and Karin Stein playing *quenas* at a Los Llaneros concert.

ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS



During their performance, Los Llaneros will play a wide variety of instruments from Venezuela and Colombia.

Instruments used in the *Llanero* cowboy music from Colombia and Venezuela

1) Arpa aragüeña (ARE-pah are-ah-goo-EN-yah) – diatonic folk harp from the Llanos with 32 or 36 strings, commonly tuned in D. In contrast to the classical harp, it is very lightweight because it has no pedals.

2) Cuatro (coo-AH-tro) – a small four-string guitar used for rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment of *Llanero* music. (*Cuatro* means “four” in Spanish.)

3) Capachos (cah-PAH-chos) – a type of maracas specially designed to play the fast rhythms of the Llanos.

4) Furruco (foo-ROO-coe) – A waxed stick placed on top of a small *tambora* drum, which when rubbed, produces a low-sounding bass effect.

5) Tambora (tum-BORE-rah) – small one-headed drum played with sticks while held between the legs of the performer.

6) Bajo (BAH-hoe) – modern-day bass guitar that accentuates the bass notes played by the left hand of the harpist.

Instruments used in Andean music from Colombia

7) Flauta (FLAH-oo-tah) – standard European concert flute.

8) Guitarra (gui-TAR-rah) - Spanish nylon-stringed guitar. It is not used in most *Llanero* music, but it is commonly used in Andean music from Colombia.

9) Tiple (TEEP-leh) – twelve-stringed guitar with a distinctive sound because of its metal strings that are grouped as three strings per note.

10) Quena (KEH-nah) - a traditional Native American flute from the Andes Mountains, usually carved from bamboo cane

11) Bombo – a large but lightweight two-headed goatskin drum from the Andes Mountains, of Native American origin, made of balsa wood laminates, usually played with a stick and a mallet. Even though it is an Andean instrument, Los Llaneros use it for some songs from the Llanos.

12) Quijada (kee-HA-dah) – donkey’s jaw, used in rhythm making

13) Guacharaca (goo-ah-cha-RAH-cah) – thin scraper made from the tough wood of the “chonta” palm, similar to a “güiro.”

(Instruments cont. pg. 10)

ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS, cont.



Instruments from northern Colombia and Venezuela used in African-rooted music

14) Gaitas (GAH-ee-tahs) – set of two Native American flutes from northern Colombia, each about 3 feet long, which have evolved to be accompanied by rhythms brought to northern Colombia from Africa.

15) Caña de millo (CAHN-ya de MEE-yo) – Native American whistle flute from northern Colombia, accompanied by rhythms and drums introduced from Africa.

16) Tambor llamador (tahm-BORE yah-ma-DOOR) – (Spanish for the “calling drum”) a one-headed goatskin drum from northern Colombia, of African origin. The player puts it between his or her legs to perform a steady beat on which all other rhythms of the *cumbia* dance from northern Colombia are based.

17) Tambor alegre (tahm-BORE ah-LEH-greh) – (Spanish for “happy drum”) a one-headed goatskin drum from northern Colombia, of African origin. The player puts it between his or her legs to perform improvisational rhythms.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Capachos

Llaneros maracas, called *capachos*, are full of surprises. Nowhere else in the world is the art of maraca playing as well developed as it is among the cowboys of the Llanos, where performers devote serious attention and long practice hours to learn to play the precise, syncopated beats of *llanero* and to develop their own techniques. Diego Mosquera of Los Llaneros is one such master of the *capachos*. He has won many maraca competitions in Colombia, earning him the nickname *Cascabel* (“rattle”).

Capachos are made of special, small gourds that grow on trees. They are then filled with the hard, round seeds of the *capacho* plant (*Canna indica*). It is the special shape of the gourd and seeds of the *capachos* that allow for the very precise control needed to play *llanero* rhythms.



Left to right: Gourds growing on the trunk of a *tapara* tree, ready to be made into a maraca; the *capacho* plant (*Canna indica*); *Capacho* seeds.

18) Tambora costeña (tahm-BORE-ah coh-TEHN-yah) – two-headed drum with goat skin, from northern Colombia, played with two sticks. Depending on the size, the drum is typically placed on a stand, and sometimes the players sit on the drum to stabilize it while playing in a parade.

19) Maracón (mar-ah-CONE) – large maraca used to accentuate the counter beat in the *cumbia* music.

20) Quitiplás (kee-tee-PLAHS) – bamboo sound sticks from Venezuela, cut to various lengths to obtain a variety of pitches. When they are hit against one another or the floor, they produce the unique *qui-ti-pla* sound. Usually performed by 3-4 people playing syncopated rhythms at the same time.

21) Congas (COHN-gahs) – modern-day drums inspired by folk drums originally brought from Africa. They are used in many Latin music styles, from folk to popular.

LATIN AMERICA



Even though the United States is commonly referred to as “America,” the United States is not the same thing as America. America consists of the South American and North American continents. America contains 42 countries! Learn more about Latin America, the people who live there, and the different styles of music that come from this area of the world.

LATIN AMERICA

Latin America can be defined as all of the countries south of the United States, including the Caribbean Islands. Latin America occupies nearly half of the Americas.

Over 400 languages are spoken in Latin America. Every country has 7 to 200 languages, including its official language(s). Spanish and Portuguese are the most common official languages in Latin America. They are derived from ancient Latin, which is where the name “Latin America” comes from. (In some Caribbean countries, the official languages are French, English, or Dutch.) Worldwide, there are nearly as many people who speak Spanish as their first language, as there are people who speak English as their first language!

HISPANICS

The term Hispanic, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, refers to Spanish-speaking people of any race. This means that a Hispanic person can be Native American, Caucasian, Black, Asian, or any combination thereof. The estimated Hispanic population of the United States as of the 2010 census is approx. 16.3%, making people of Hispanic origin the nation’s largest minority.

LATIN AMERICAN MUSIC AND ORIGINS

Latin American music is a very broad category of music. Music styles vary by region and are closely tied to the history of the various peoples who have lived in Latin America.

Ethnic Music

Prior to contact with Europeans, Native Americans played a large variety of wind and percussion instruments. This music often was played for sacred purposes. Often such traditional music is called “ethnic” music, and it is still played in remote areas of Latin America today.

Folk Music

Latin American “folk” music is played in both rural and urban settings today. Los Llaneros play folk music from Colombia and Venezuela. The different styles of folk music were created as a result of different cultures and music traditions coming into contact with one another. For instance, when Europeans arrived in Latin America, they introduced string instruments such as the harp, violin, lute, and mandolin. These instruments were incorporated into the already existing Native American music, and inspired the creation of dozens of new string instruments unique to Latin America. Africans brought to Latin America through slavery also added to the creation of Latin American folk music styles. Africans brought new rhythms, percussion instruments, and distinct vocal harmony traditions.

Popular Music

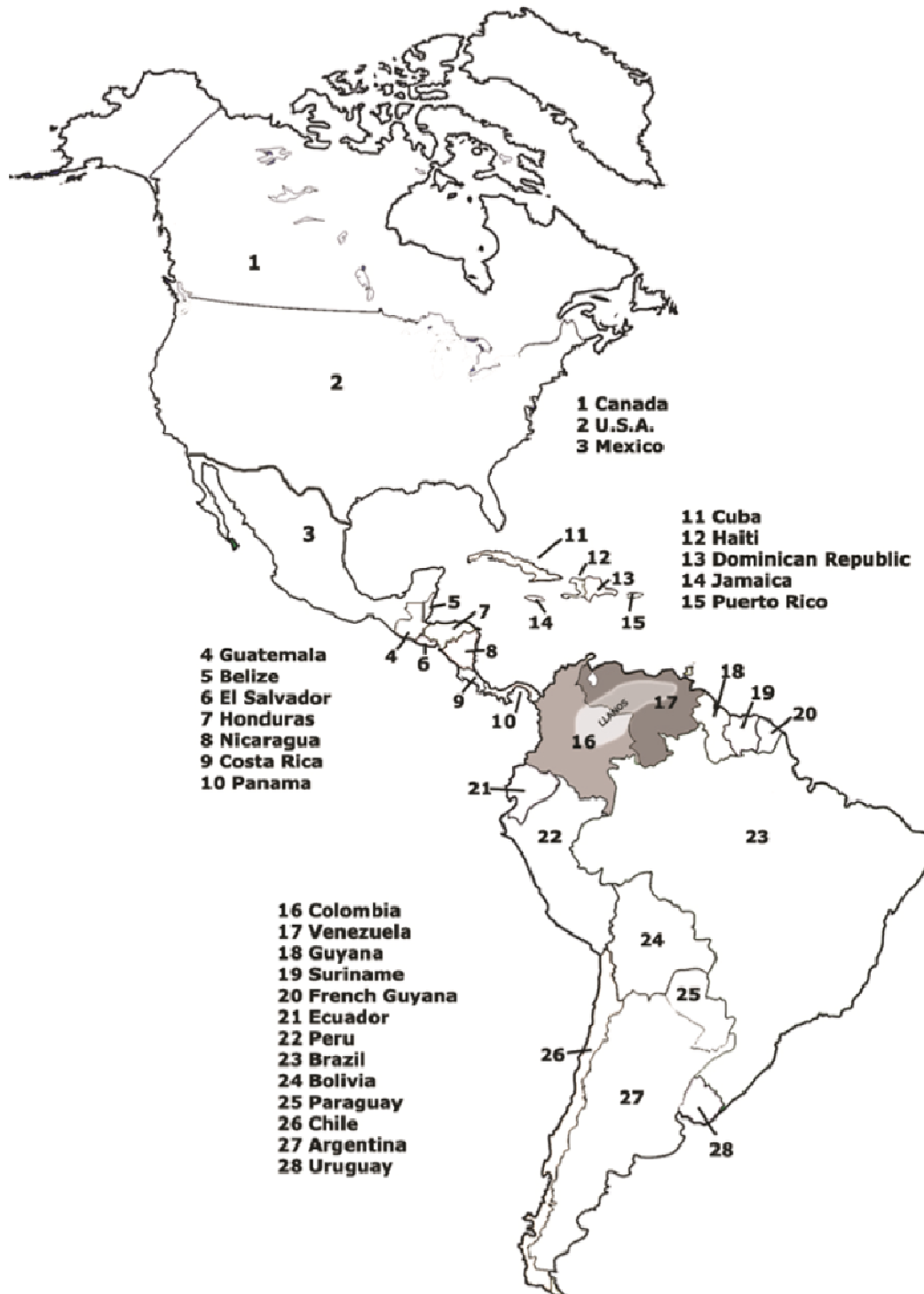
Latin American music plays a prominent place in popular music. Popular music styles include Brazilian *bossa nova*, New York *salsa*, and the rock tunes of artists such as Shakira, Jennifer Lopez, and Marc Anthony.

TOP: Photo from the Llanos region.

MAP OF THE AMERICAS

THE AMERICAS

NORTH AMERICA: Countries 1-15 / SOUTH AMERICA: Countries 16-28
Only the largest countries are shown on this map



ABOUT THE LLANOS



Los Llaneros (yah-NEH-ros) specialize in the music of the Colombian/Venezuelan plains that surround the vast basin of the Orinoco River. These plains are called Llanos (YAH-nos). Learn more about this unique region prior to the performance.

GEOGRAPHY

The Llanos (YAH-nos) is an extensive area of grasslands, plains, and small forest stands shared by the countries of Colombia and Venezuela in South America. The open grassland areas of the Llanos look similar to the Great Plains of the United States and Canada in summer. The Llanos are located to the north and west of the great

Orinoco River, and they border the Amazon rainforest along their entire southern edge. In all, the Llanos cover an area that is somewhat larger than the state of California.

The Llanos are mostly covered by soils of low nutritional value. Grasses are the primary type of plant able to grow in this soil, which is why it became such an important cattle ranching region after Spaniards introduced horses and cattle in the 16th Century. However, some areas with deeper and richer soils, and along rivers and creeks, have relatively large patches of deciduous forest (forests that lose their leaves in the dry season).

SEASONS

In the Llanos, there are two distinct seasons that are very different from one another. During the rainy season (mid-April to mid-November), torrential rains often cause rivers to flood much of the Llanos, and the vegetation is lush and green. In the dry season (late November to mid-April), there is very little rain and much of the landscape turns brown. Temperatures are warm all year, ranging from about 65 at night to about 90 in the daytime.

(‘About the Llanos’ cont. pg. 14)

Lush, green vegetation of the rainy season in the Llanos (left), contrasted with the brown hue of the dry season (right).



ABOUT THE LLANOS, cont.



ANIMAL LIFE

The Llanos are home to diverse animal life. There are many monkeys, turtles, deers, snakes, butterflies, caimans, armadillos, and capybaras, just to name a few. Particularly spectacular are the birds that gather in large numbers during the dry season, which coincides with the cold winter of the north. The birds escape the cold temperatures by migrating south, and they feed on the fish and other animals and plants that concentrate in and near the drying wetlands during the dry season.

PEOPLE

The Llanos are a very sparsely populated region. This means that for its size, very few people live in the Llanos. The people of the Llanos are mostly cattle ranchers and cowboys of Spanish and Native American origin, along with their families. There are also rice, cotton, oil palm, pine tree and sugar cane farmers and their families.

In addition to farmers, there are eleven Native American groups that live in the Colombian Llanos today as well. Some live in villages, others lead a nomadic lifestyle and live as hunters and gatherers.

(‘About the Llanos’ cont. pg. 15)



Left: Capybaras, the world's largest rodent.

Right: Swarms of ducks, ibises, egrets, and other waterfowl gather in the Llanos during the dry season.

ABOUT THE LLANOS, cont.



LLANERO MUSIC AND DANCES

When Europeans arrived in the Llanos, they brought with them string instruments and some wind and percussion instruments. They also brought horses and cattle. Soon the vast savannas became home to extensive cattle ranches. Llanero (Yah-NEH-ro) music is essentially cowboy music. It speaks of the beautiful grasslands, the open skies, the wide rivers, the birds, the mammals, and love. Of course, because it is cowboy music, it also speaks of horses and cows!

People of all ages love their *Llanero* music in Colombia and Venezuela – even people who lead contemporary lifestyles in the cities and might listen to a lot of popular music. Even the young take pride in participating in the performance of *Llanero* music and dances.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Young People

In the Llanos, children start participating at an early age in music making and dancing.



Authentic Llanero music is rarely performed outside of the Llanos savannas because of its intricate instrumental techniques. As a result, it is one of Latin America's best kept secrets. To hear and see Llanero music performed is an extremely rare and special opportunity!

TOP: *Joropo* dancers from the Llanos of Colombia.

VOCABULARY



America: North America and South America combined. The United States is not the same thing as America; instead, it is just one of 42 countries in America. (11)



Capachos (cah-PAH-chos): type of maracas specially designed to play the fast rhythms of the Llanos. Capachos are made from special gourds and are filled with seeds from the capacho plant. (10)

Cuatro (coo-AH-tro): a small four-string guitar used for rhythmic and harmonic accompaniments of *llanero* music. Cuatro means “four” in Spanish. (10)

Hispanics: Spanish-speaking people of any race. This means that a Hispanic person can be Native American, Caucasian, Black, Asian, or any combination. All of the members of Los Llaneros are Hispanic. (11)

Latin America: all of the countries south of the United States in the Americas, including the Caribbean Islands. (11)

Llanos (YAH-nos): an extensive area of grasslands, plains, and small forests shared by the countries of Colombia and Venezuela. The Llanos are located to the north and west of the Orinoco River. (13)

Llanero: cowboy music from the Llanos of Colombia and Venezuela. (8, 15)

Nomadic: a lifestyle in which a people has no permanent place where they live; instead, they move from place to place, often based on the season, to find food. Some Native American groups that live in the Llanos continue to live a nomadic lifestyle. (14)



Orinoco River: South American river that flows for 1,700 miles through Venezuela and forms part of the border between the countries of Colombia and Venezuela. (6, 13)

Savannas: a grassland region that may have scattered trees. The Llanos are a savanna located in South America. (8, 15)

Spanish: a language derived from ancient Latin that is widely spoken throughout Latin America. Spanish was brought to Latin America by the European Spaniards. Worldwide, there are nearly as many people who speak Spanish as their first language as there are people who speak English as their first language. (8, 11)

TOP: Herding cattle on a ranch in Los Llanos.

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION, pg. 1



Activity: Design a CD Cover

Goal: To demonstrate understanding of elements of the culture of the Llanos through visual art

When: After the performance

Explanation:

In this activity, students will design their own CD cover that they feel represents Los Llaneros music.

Curriculum Connections: Visual Arts, Social Studies

Activity:

1. Tell students to pretend that Los Llaneros has asked them to design a new CD cover for their next album. They want the CD cover to celebrate the music and culture of the Llanos of Colombia and Venezuela.
2. Ask students to identify several important ideas and images that come to mind when they think about the concert and what they learned about the Llanos.
3. Ask students to sketch several design ideas on scratch paper.
4. When they have settled on a final design, have them create their final rendition on good paper.
5. You may also ask them to create a list of song titles or a title for the entire album.
6. Have students imagine that they are going to present their design to members of Los Llaneros, played by you. Use the discussion questions to ask them about their design.

Discussion Questions:

1. What elements did you include in your design and why?
2. Are there other elements that you considered but did not use?
3. Why should I choose your design and title?
4. What does your design tell a people about our music/culture?

Activity: Write a Review

Goal: To write a review of the performance

When: After the performance

Explanation: In this activity, students will reflect on the performance by writing their own review.

Curriculum Connections: Literacy, Social Studies

1. Ask students to imagine that they are a critic for the school newspaper. They are going to write a review of the performance to inform others about what they experienced.
2. In the review they should describe with detail: what they saw; what they heard; how the performance made them feel; what the performance reminded them of; and what their favorite part was and why.
3. Remind students that they must paint a picture of the experience with their words so that others who did not see the performance can imagine it.

Discussion:

1. What did you include in your review? Why was it important to include?

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION, pg. 2



Activity: Instruments and Culture

Goal: To explore the place of different folk instruments in Colombian and Venezuelan music.

When: Before the performance

Curriculum Connections: Music, Social Studies, Literacy, Culture

Explanation: In this activity, students will research one of the folk instruments played by Los Llaneros and report their findings to the class.

Activity:

1. Provide each student with a copy of pages 9-10, which describes many of the instruments.
2. Ask students to circle each of the instruments they have heard of before. Using a different color of writing utensil, have them put an X next to the ones that are new to them.
3. Next, assign each student an instrument from the list and have them research the instrument on the internet or through appropriate print resources in your school library.
4. Students should answer the following questions:
 - What is the instrument made from?
 - Where did it originate?
 - How is it played?
 - What does it sound like?
 - Is it used for any special purposes?

5. Have students write one or more paragraphs about their research findings. They should also include a drawing or photo of the instrument if at all possible.
6. Last, ask students to present their research to the class. If students found audio clips of their instrument being played, allow them to share with the class as part of their report.

Discussion Questions:

1. What places did the different instruments come from? Were they influenced by music and instruments from outside of Venezuela and Colombia? If so, what does this suggest about the the different cultures in Colombia and Venezuela and how they were formed?
2. When do we make music? Why? Is this true for all cultures, regardless of their location or place in time?
3. What similarities did you notice between the instrument you researched and instruments that others researched? What differences were there?

Follow-Up Discussion for After the Performance:

1. Did you see or hear the instrument you researched during the performance?
2. If so, did it match your expectations or was it different in some way?
3. Did you learn anything new about the instrument from the performers? If so, what?

Audio clips of several of the instruments can be heard at www.losllaneros.com. Click on 'Educational' then click on 'Instruments' to access this resource.

TOP: Dancers perform the Afro-Caribbean *cumbia* from the Colombian coastlands.

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION, pg. 3



Activity: Rhythm Exploration

Goal: To understand the concept of rhythm and to hear the rhythm that exists around us.

When: Before the performance

Curriculum Connection: Music

Explanation: Rhythm and sounds are a part of life in every culture. During the performance, the musicians will share the precise, syncopated rhythms of *Llanero* music on the *capachos* (see page 10). In this activity, students will create their own rhythms with their bodies and other instruments they find in the classroom.

Activity:

1. As a class, watch a clip of two members of Los Llaneros playing the *capachos*. (Visit www.losllaneros.com, click on "Videos," and watch the video entitled "Maraca Duel.")
2. Ask students to share their observations of the clip before telling them that they will explore creating their own rhythms.
3. To begin, create a simple clapping rhythm for the class to echo. As they master each rhythm, make a new complex rhythm for students to repeat. You can expand from just clapping to stomping your feet, snapping your fingers, or gently slapping the knee or chest.
4. See if you can make a class song using these different rhythms. Divide the class into groups and

have each group come up with their own rhythm. Have them perform them in varying orders, all together, or in response to one another.

5. Next, have your students look around the classroom for ordinary objects that can be used to create new sounds. For example, scrunching or shaking a trashbag, opening and closing of a pencil box or backpack, tapping a pen on the desktop, etc.
6. Have students create a short rhythm that they would like to make with their chosen "instrument" and write out a notation that they can read corresponding to their rhythm. (You may want to collaborate with your music specialist for this portion of the activity.)
7. Arrange these notations in different orders to create a class musical piece.

Discussion:

1. What is rhythm?
2. Where can you find rhythm? Do you have your own rhythm?
3. Can you see rhythms? What do they look like?

Follow-Up Discussion for After the Performance:

1. Could you hear the different rhythms throughout the performance? How did they change the feel of the different pieces?
2. Which piece was your favorite and why?
3. Do you remember any of the rhythms that were played during the show? Were these harder or easier than the ones you made up in class?
4. Do you remember the different instruments used? How did each instrument sound? How did their unique sounds contribute to the overall feeling of the piece?

CLASSROOM RESOURCES



VIDEO:

Watch videos on “Los Llaneros” website: <http://www.losllaneros.com>

“The Magic Harp: A Story from Venezuela.” Legends and Folktales From Around the World Series, Video Cassette - 26 minutes - Color - 1985.

A story from the Llanos region of Southern Venezuela about a boy who saves his family from destitution through the power and beauty of his music. In Spanish with English voice-over narration.

Three-year-old playing the capachos (llaneros maracas): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1vlxsKrLv0>

WEB RESOURCES:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Llanero>

http://www.lastfrontiers.com/venezuela/detail_llanos.htm

Run searches for “Venezuelan cowboys,” “vaqueros,” “South American cowboys,” etc.

OTHER:

Latin America Music and Culture Kit, developed by

CD-Rom containing many resources and information about Latin America, including short films, theater pieces, photos, music for all ages and more. Order it from www.latinculturekit.com.

Your local library -

Your school or local library may have books about “Venezuela,” “Colombia,” “Los Llanos,” “Llanos,” “Venezuelan savannas or savannahs,” “Venezuelan Llanos,” “Colombian Llanos,” “Venezuelan cowboys,” “Venezuelan hatos” (ranches), “Llaneros,” and “Vaqueros.” You might find some surprises in those searches.