

Berklee College of Music

Sancocho.
Sampling Traditional Colombian Culture

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Innovation & Technology

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Abstract

The culminating experience is based in exploring in depth the world of recording engineering and its possibilities to build an innovative bundle (sample pack) that showcases Colombian culture. The main idea behind the bundle musical wise: Provide tools to beat makers and producers that are unique and interesting but that also showcase the beauty and cultural traditions of Colombia. Engineering wise is for it to be very intuitive and that any person new or experienced in beatmaking can make good use of it. Designed to be a very musical pack, the samples will work with each other, this with the purpose of making the creation process more effective without losing the musicality. The pack will be divided in the following categories: One Shots, Loops, Kontakt Instruments, digital synthesizer presets and an audio effect rack. This way it would be possible to play the instruments on all the octaves of your MIDI Keyboard and to change certain dynamic and modulation parameters to taste. After the release, an EP will be composed using the bundle, featuring talents from Berklee in an attempt to promote collectivity during these COVID- 19 times.

Introduction

Samples have always been the subject of controversy. There are types of musicians and producers who avoid the use of samples, under the perspective that their music will lose authenticity. On the other hand, there is this huge market that is constantly being fed¹²³⁴, nonetheless producers and beat makers can't have enough of it, there is and always will be room for new sounds and new ways to create spicy samples.

Sancocho is a Bundle that will spread Colombian culture in every production that uses samples from the pack. Containing One shots, loops, two Kontakt instruments, Vital synth presets and one FX Rack, this pack not only showcases Colombian music in a traditional way, but also presents the traditional instruments with an innovative approach. Recording engineering creativity starts to become an important factor at this point along with the post production work, which will always be aimed to create this gritty, lo-fi, vintage psychedelic texture to the samples.

“Every kid has a laptop; everyone can make music, so in order to stand out, I think it's important to find that sonic identity, I think my sonic identity is finding these weird sounds that may not necessarily sound that musical, and make them sound musical.”

*Flume.*⁵

Since technology has allowed every person to be able to build a whole song from scratch within their laptop, this bundle seeks to nourish this process for beatmakers, giving them samples

¹ <https://www.musicradar.com/news/tech/free-music-samples-royalty-free-loops-hits-and-multis-to-download>

² <https://www.samplephonics.com/products/free>

³ <https://sloopy.com/sample-packs/free>

⁴ <https://samples.landr.com>

⁵ Harley Streten *rainy Quote*. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/flume_780496

and instruments processed with the help of tools such as Berklee's studio hardware, guitar pedals and MPCs in an attempt to widen their resources. The bundle will be very user friendly so that beat makers of any level could take full advantage of it.

There is also an invitation in this project for all the experienced producers, the anti-sample producers and every producer who would like to know more about Colombian culture and put a taste of this delicious "Sancocho" in their music. In this bundle you will find curious and unique options to incorporate to your music no matter the genre.

Review State of the Art

The Suite aims to be a tool that helps starting and experienced producers to widen their boundaries and explore new sounds and textures, in this case guided towards traditional Colombian music. Pages like Splice⁶ and Loopmasters have specialized packs that are focused on Colombian rhythms and instruments, even Ableton has some Free packs⁷ that resemble some of the traditional music Colombia has to offer. Nonetheless some of these packs are straight sample packs, or others are mapped instruments that emulate exactly how the instrument sounds in real life. This project seeks to nourish itself from all the above mentioned and take it one step further.

The beginning of sampling could be traced years ago, when Jazz players used to play riffs or licks from other musicians in their own performances, then evolved into *Musique Concrete* where they recorded sounds of the everyday routine, and create new sounds by splitting the tape

⁶ "Colombian Percussion Pack". Splice.com. https://splice.com/sounds/splice-originals/so_colombian_percussion

⁷ "Pico Pack". Ableton.com. <https://www.ableton.com/en/blog/pico-new-global-beat/>

and playing it at different RPMs; Almost 20 years after, the creation of the Mellotron (previously called Chamberlain) happened, this instrument worked by playing different slices of tape, this way you could make your keyboard sound like Strings or Brass for example. At the same time this was happening, in Jamaica the use of Riddims was getting popular, DJs started playing pre-recorded Rhythm parts of other Reggae records to create their own music. Since this, almost 50 years have passed and thanks to technology and digital systems the process of sampling is easier and more friendly.

Nowadays, the sampling game has evolved too much, there are many sources where you can go and look for samples, for example Native Instruments extensions, that always have specific themes for each of them (I.E West Coast Sound, Lo Fi Pack, etc...), Plug-In bundles, softwares like Arcade by Output, Ableton additional Audio Content (*Chop & Swing Pack*), and web pages of musicians that make their living by making sample packs such as Goldbaby.co⁸ or Aj Hall's *Left Field Drum Breaks*⁹. The culminating experience is influenced by all of these previously mentioned creators, leading to developing a Suite that resembles Colombian culture but also has a psychedelia feeling in it; Via external processors, guitar pedals and more, the Suite will have a psychedelic, vintage, old school sound. Two full Kontakt instruments and one FX rack will also be part of the pack, making the project a Bundle.

⁸ Goldbaby.co. <https://www.goldbaby.co.nz/index.html>

⁹ Hall, AJ. "Left Field Drum Breaks": <https://ajhallmusic.com/sound-kits>

Description

The main purpose of this project is to provide sources for producers and beatmakers that are fresh and distinct from what is usual in the sample market. Sancocho Bundle will offer the user the possibility to access the Caribbean and South Pacific areas of Colombia through music, ranging from cumbia and porro to currulao, bunde & bullerengue. This pack will also display different traditional genres in their classic interpretation style. Producers will find in this bundle loops of tamboras, alegres, cununos, marimbas, drums and “Menus” which are all of the instruments mentioned before played together, showcasing all the beauty and years of tradition of the Colombian culture.

Users will also find spiced versions of the traditional loops, with the intention of demonstrating how the sounds can be used in the production of modern music. Making use of tools like the Roland SP 404sx, the Numark PT01 turntable and many guitar pedals the original loops were processed in non-traditional ways, hoping to provide some new approaches and to inspire creative ideas in the users.

As previously mentioned, the Sancocho Bundle is not just a sample pack, or just about loops. It also contains two Kontakt instruments: Marimba and Colombian Percs, which were created paying close attention to details, trying to make them as organic and natural sounding as possible. The Marimba will offer different presets which the user can switch between depending on if they want a more natural sound, or a more processed one. There also is a very simple but powerful display so that users can tweak their sound to taste. The Colombian Percs one is more complex but also very user friendly, it contains keyswitches in the lower octave, so that users can

change the type of mallet hitting the tambora. It also features many different types of strikes in which a Cununo and Alegre can be hit. It is planned to be a fun instrument which can be played by multiple people together or to layer a full percussion arrangement. All of the samples contained in the instruments will be also available as one shots.

Sound design also played a large part in the process of creating this bundle. One disadvantage encountered was the lack of traditional gaitas around Spain, but being such an important element of the caribbean traditional music in Colombia it could not be left out. The approach was to create different physical modelling synth presets of the traditional gaita, making use of the synthesizer Vital. To conclude the bundle also contains an Ableton FX Rack that gives customers the ease of changing their sound solely by tweaking one knob.

Users will find 6 folders and a Readme file, the latter will guide them through the Kontakt Instruments installation process and also on how to use the synth presets. There is one folder for each category of the bundle, so that the user can just drag and drop loops, one shots, or the FX rack directly to their DAW and create their own music with a touch of Colombia.

Innovative Aspects

This culminating experience is the beginning of a life project, it's the first volume of the Sancocho series which will continue growing and expanding through the Colombian territory. It is very rare to find a library so extense and detailed of certain zones of one country's culture and it would be innovative in the music industry to continue with this concept, getting to cover the Colombian territory with different volumes. Also, it is giving innovative sounds to music makers, sounds that are out of the normal mainstream music.

Another factor enhancing the innovation of this bundle is the fact that a user can both access the Menu (a.k.a. the full loop) and the individual components of that full loop. These individual components could include the following: Cununos, Alegres, Tamboras & Marimbas. Beatmakers often find the obstacle of finding a nice loop, but sometimes they just like the drums and not the harmonic part of the loop, this innovative aspect solves that.

It is very common for sample packs to be focused on one determined genre (EDM, Hip Hop, etc.). The Sancocho Bundle has more than just one approach to a musical style, customers will find traditional Colombian music but also spiced up versions, which means versions of the same loops but treated differently so that is more directly usable in a Hip Hop beat, for example.

New Skills Acquired

This culminating experience started with an extensive research of Colombian traditional music, the cultural knowledge acquired in the process is very valuable since it will contribute to develop the aesthetic Sergio wants to portray and also it is giving him more tools to be more creative and resourceful when working with projects that involve Colombian culture.

Additionally, another key skill learned was the ability to create Kontakt instruments from scratch. It will be very handy in the future for the other volumes of the pack. Kontakt has a full world inside and certainly through time every instrument will be better than the previous one.

The opportunity to have worked with traditional instruments and genres helped a lot to expand the limits of types of music in which Sergio is comfortable to record and mix. This new skill will come in handy when facing a recording of traditional world's music and also in the mixing process of it.

Synthesis and sound design were key to make the vibe of the Caribbean tradition come to life. In the process of making the gaita physical modeling presets, Sergio learned how to work Vital and how to make interesting textures out of plain oscillators.

Challenges

- Expected

The first challenge encountered was related to the cultural research of Colombian music styles, originally the idea was set to cover the whole Colombian territory, but after months of research it was completely clear that for the purpose of this culminating experience that was an impossible task, Colombian culture is very diverse, each genre has a whole story behind and it was important for Sergio to be immersed in what the music actually means, so there was not enough time to go that deep in all of them, thus, the decision was to cover most of the genres of just two zones of the Colombian territory, which leads me to my second challenge, which was the fact that being in Spain, it is not an easy task to find traditional Colombian instruments, at the end not all of them were found, Sergio had to design via synthesizers some of the instruments, and some of them unfortunately were left out, nonetheless the main feel of every genre was achieved.

- Unexpected

Some other challenges showed up when starting to work on the Kontakt instruments. Not being a certified Kontakt Instruments developer makes it difficult to be able to make your library appear on the main Kontakt Libraries Menu, and also the fact that there are so many changes between Kontakt 6 and Kontakt 5 made it harder to make the instruments compatible with any version. However, thanks to the guide of the advisor all of these problems were solved.

Future Ramifications

The first objective in the near future is to release the Sancocho Bundle Vol.1, this will be done via Duson Audio, a Sample library created by Phillipe Dionne, a fellow MPTI graduate student. The Sancocho Bundle will be released on the 20th of July, a day that marks the independence of Colombia. This release will be accompanied by previous expectation campaigns in which a small percentage of the whole bundle will be available for people to use and get a taste of, also there is a contest in mind in which the participants will create full beats or compositions using only the Sancocho Bundle.

Since there are going to be more volumes in the Sancocho series, creating a full brand around it is needed. With the help of Duson, we will develop in a deeper way the concept of the bundle, having in mind the notion of blending the concept of sounds and food together but going deeper into it, this will allow the brand to have a strong but also clear concept that will be maintained throughout the different volumes.

Lastly, Sergio Ruiz aka ZirSerio will be releasing an EP using the Sancocho Bundle and featuring collaborations from fellow Berklee students, with the purpose of showing potential users what the Bundle is capable of.

Conclusions

Colombian traditional music is a broad subject that needs high amounts of research, for the author of the Sancocho Bundle it was very valuable to know what the recorded sounds mean in depth for the culture, this whole project's intention is to pay respects to the Colombian territory and to show in the way the creator knows best all the appreciation for the land who saw him grow and become the person he is now. Throughout the whole process of making the bundle, the author gained lots of valuable knowledge of the Colombian culture.

This culminating experience gave the author the opportunity to grow as a recording and mixing engineer, as well as allowed him to find new paths and tools that facilitate musical creation, making him a more complete and versatile music producer. The author was able to analyze his path as a beatmaker and find certain aspects that he felt were missing in most sample packs to this day. This analysis led to some innovative ideas that make the Sancocho Bundle unique in its kind.

The Sancocho Bundle is just starting, and the developer is going to keep on working on this idea, creating more volumes showcasing more traditional music from different regions of Colombia. And in the long term, the idea will be expanding to more countries.

Challenges will always be part of the process and finding a good team that understands the concept and helps make it more interesting is key.

Appendix

- Plan Of Action & Projected Timeline

The development of the project involves the need for previous research, Colombian culture is so wide that it is completely necessary to choose some route to go with. Since the producer is located in Valencia, the resources available in Valencia also play a big role in choosing the genres which will be used to create the package, there are limitations but that's not something that will stop the producer from the goal. Part of the project essence is to carry a piece of Colombia everywhere. Drawing from the resourcefulness of Colombian culture, this bundle is intended to go wherever you go and make music with whatever is at hand and wherever you are.

	16 - 20 Nov	23 - 27	30 Nov - 4	7 - 11	14 - 18 Dec	21 - 25	28 Dec - 1	4 - 8 Jan	11 - 15	18 - 22	25 - 29	1 - 5 Feb	8 - 12 Feb	15 - 19 Feb	22 - 26 Feb	1 - 5 Mar	8 - 12 Mar	15 - 19 Mar	22 - 26 Mar	29 Mar - 2 Apr	5 - 9 Apr	12 - 16 Apr	19 - 23 Apr	26 - 30 Apr	
Traditional Colombian Music Research																									
Pablo Office Hours																									
Define Bundle Aesthetics																									
Write Abstract																									
Contact Musicians and Places that have the needed instruments																									
Office Hours Mel																									
Write State Of The Art																									
Record and Sample Test (Kontakt)																									
Write CE Proposal																									
Planning approach for the Sample Pack to be cohesive between samples																									
Traditional Colombian Music Research (Ground Ideas with the resources available in mind)																									
Brainstorm Recording Engineering Innovative Ideas																									
Advance on learning Kontakt.																									
Last week of completely defining the genres research.																									
Last week of searching for traditional instruments and musicians continues.																									
Determine instruments that will be recorded.																									
Start getting the crew ready (Musicians)																									
Check studios availability for CE work, Studio bookings if possible.																									
Floor plans, Input lists. Studio Bookings if possible.																									
Get the crew ready (Musicians, Assisting engineer)																									
Studio Bookings.																									
Recording Week																									
Tests on 1st Recording, Post production attempt (Establish the pack style)																									
Mapped Instruments will be ready by the end of this week, get them mixed and ready to map.																									
Start Mapping Instruments (Kontakt)																									
Continue Mapping Instruments.																									
FX Rack modeling.																									
Mix of one shots and loops.																									
Start laying Second Kontakt Instrument One Shots.																									
Preparing files for deliverables.																									
Artwork Bundle																									
Artwork for Kontakt Instruments																									
Marketing Plan.																									
Artwork (Whole Bundle)																									

- **Deliverables:**

- **Sancocho Bundle:**

- Loops Files
 - Traditional Loops
 - Spiced Loops
- One Shots Files
- Kontakt Instrument #1 Marimba
- Kontakt Instrument #2 Colombian Percs
- Vital Synth Presets of Gaitas
- Ableton FX Rack
- Artwork

- **Resources & Budget:**

ITEM	PROPOSED	REAL
MATERIALS		
Hard Drive	\$150	\$0
DIY Accessories for recording	\$30	\$30
EQUIPMENT		
HARDWARE		
Mics (Rental) 25 days	\$825	\$0
Interface	\$700	\$0
Computer	\$3,100	\$3,100
SOFTWARE		

Ableton	\$500	\$500
Pro Tools	\$600	\$0
PERSONNEL		
Musicians (3Max) (\$60 Per Hour) (2 Hours each day)	\$1,000	\$0
Assisting Engineers	\$250	\$0
STUDIO		
BERKLEE (\$600, 5 Days)	\$3000	\$0
HOME (\$80, 5 Days)	\$400	\$0
CATERING		
MEALS (3 Persons, 1 Meal, 2 Days)	\$60	\$0
OVERHEAD		
RENT	\$430	\$430
POWER	\$25	\$25
WATER	\$20	\$20
GAS	\$20	\$20
INTERNET	\$20	\$20
PHONE	\$20	\$20
FEEES		
YOUR FEE	\$300	\$0
TOTALS	\$11,450	\$4,135

Bibliography

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