

Cunamacué - Afro-Peruvian Dance and Music Study Guide & Activities



Cunamacué, based in Oakland, California, is an arts organization dedicated to promoting Afro-Peruvian culture through its music and dance. The name *Cunamacué* is a reminder that their work is based on ancestral roots and meant to be left for future generations. The word *macué* is representative of the ancestors; it is a stream in Mozambique, one of the places from which Africans were uprooted and taken to Perú. *Cuna* is the Spanish word for crib, representing future generations.

Carmen Roman is the founder and Artistic Director of *Cunamacué*. Raised both in Lima, Peru, and the Bay Area, Carmen is a dancer, choreographer, educator, filmmaker, and emerging scholar. She approaches the practice of Afro-Peruvian dance as a way to strengthen traditions and cultural identity, as well as a vehicle for self-expression.



Geography & Language

Peru is located on the Pacific Coast of South America. The country's 3 official languages are Spanish, Quechua and Aymara, although there are more than 100 languages spoken across the entire country.

****How many languages are spoken in your city? Your classroom? Your house?***



The country is composed of three regions — Coast, Andes (highlands/mountains), and rainforest (Amazon) — each with distinct food, dances, and music.

Cunamacué presents dance and music from the African descendant Peruvian population of Peru, the majority of whom live in cities in the coastal region.

Afro-Peruvians

Currently, African descendants in Peru make up 3-4% of the population with the highest concentrations living in the **coastal cities** of Lima, Chincha, Zaña and Yapatera. 400 years ago African descendants composed more than 70% of the population in Lima. The contributions of African descendants are many from literature, colloquial language, military service, cultural expressions, food, sports, etc.

Let's Dance!

- Listen to the following Afro-Peruvian song: "[Se Me Van Los Pies](#)" by Pepé Vasquéz
- Try clapping to the beat, stepping to the beat, moving your shoulders to the beat, moving other body parts to the beat (hips, torso, head, knees, etc.).
- Pick a body part, move it to the beat for 4 counts, freeze for 4 counts. Repeat.
- Try it again with the same body part, and then pick a different one.
- Extra challenge: Try it with 2 body parts or pick a different body part for each beat.

Great job! Now let's see how they dance in Peru!

Afro-Peruvian Dances - Festejo



The *festejo* is danced in a context of celebration and it's very popular at Afro-Peruvian events. The word *festejo* comes from the Spanish word "*festejar*", which means to celebrate. It is the most popular Afro-Peruvian music and dance genre. The dance is characterized by its agility with the most prominent movements being of the spine, pelvis and hips.

[Watch this video of a festejo performance.](#) How are the dancers moving their arms? hips? shoulders? Are they using big or small movements? Are they making any shapes? How do the dancers move around the stage? How do they interact with other dancers? What do you notice that is similar or different to a dance that you already know?

Create a dance of celebration! How do you like to celebrate? What types of movements would you use to make a dance of celebration? Create a short celebration dance and share it with your class. Upload on Flipgrid to create a classroom choreography!

Zamacueca



The origins of the *zamacueca* date back to the 1800's. Traditionally, it is a couple's dance, performed with two handkerchiefs that serve as an extension of the dancers' bodies and compliment the movements. The *zamacueca* inspired other dances in Latin America as well when it traveled outside of Peru transforming into the *cueca* in Chile, *la chilena* in Mexico, and others.

[Watch this performance of zamacueca.](#) How do the dancers move the different parts of their bodies? (arms, shoulders, hips, feet, etc). How are the movements similar to those used in *festejo*? How are they different?

Listen to more zamacueca music here:

["Pa' Goza Con el Ritmo del Tambo"](#) by Victoria Santa Cruz

["No Hay Negro Que Se Me Resista"](#) by Victoria Santa Cruz

["Ven a Mi Encuentro"](#) by Victoria Santa Cruz

Son de los Diablos



The *son de los diablos* (“song of the devils”) dates back to times of colonization. It began as a dance performed during the Corpus Christi procession (a catholic celebration). It eventually separated from its religious origins to be performed in the streets of Lima during Carnival times.

Watch this [video of son de los diablos](#) (2:12 - 3:56). How would you describe this dance to a friend?

Check out some of these fun [“diablo” moves](#) and try to follow along.

Zapateo **Afro-Peruano**

The **Afro-Peruvian zapateo** (footwork) entails making music with your feet including combinations of stomps with the whole foot, with the ball of the foot, or with the heels. It also involves body percussion such as claps, pats on chest or legs. When the Spanish imposed a ban on drums, African descendants transformed the rhythms played on the drums to rhythms played with or on the body.

Exploration: Take a few minutes and discover all the different types of sounds you can make using **only** your feet!

- * How many different sounds did you make?
- * Can you put these sounds together in a pattern?



Watch this [video of zapateo](#) featuring Huevito and Lalo Izquierdo. Did the performers move in any ways that surprised you? What were your favorite movements?

Watch this [video of zapateo](#) with Carmen and Braulio (0:38 - 2:29). What other elements does Carmen add to her performance?

Afro-Peruvian Musical Instruments

Cajon

(Box)



[Listen Here!](#)

Cajita



[Listen Here!](#)

Quijada de Burro

(Donkey Jaw Bone)



[Listen Here!](#)

Conga



Bass



Guitar



Putting it all together

Listen to the following examples and see if you can hear each instrument!

[“Sanguito”](#) by Cotito Medrano

[“Festejo”](#) by Novalima

Thank you for being a Rhythmix PAL!

Cunamacue's PAL Performance will be available for viewing throughout the month of September, 2020.

For more info about Cunamacue, please visit: <https://www.cunamacue.org/>



Rhythmix Performance, Art & Learning (PAL) is an assembly-based youth arts education program developed in collaboration with the Alameda Unified School District. PAL fosters awareness about world cultures and empowers underserved youth through exposure to world music and dance.

For more information about Rhythmix PAL program, please visit [our website](#).

Rhythmix Cultural Works brings people of all ages together to experience and explore music, dance, visual art and educational opportunities. The organization seeks to build community by inspiring engagement in the arts as a way to learn about each other and the world. [Click here](#) for more info about Rhythmix Cultural Works.