

Los Kjarkas and the Diasporic Community on the Internet

No se acaba el mundo The world will not end
cuando un amor se va when a loved one goes away
no se acaba el mundo The world will not end
y no se derrumbará and not be overthrown.⁴¹

This article examines questions of how elements of musical traditions are reproduced in new social contexts, and what kind of music-making processes are involved when Los Kjarkas, an urban folk music group from Bolivia, encounters a diasporic community in Europe.⁴² Transnational experiences and opportunities for new forms of communication are significant for this urban folk music culture, which travels between places and spaces, as will be discussed in this article. This essay also focuses on the relationship between representations of Bolivian urban folk music and spaces where old and new meanings of identity and relationships are based on a sense of community. Aspects concerning relationships between Andean popular music, Latin American music and Bolivian folk music and their relationships to the audience are explored. Issues such as how relationships between a musical culture and a globally marginalised musical culture are articulated on the Internet, and new as well as old identities are also studied. Furthermore, issues about how cultural events are organised in diasporic formations and staged in new media relating to a tour in Europe will also be addressed. I will attempt to show how Los Kjarkas and Andean diasporic groups contribute to the construction of a relationship between folk, popular, rural and urban music as well as a relationship between a local and a global scene.

The theoretical approach in the essay is based on popular music theory, social studies about diasporas, and studies about Andean music cultures. As pointed out in previous studies relating to Andean music, music is an important part of

41 Lyrics from the song *Ave de Cristal*, Los Kjarkas. It was performed in many concerts in Europe October 2012, for instance, in Geneva 27 October 2012.

42 Transcriptions and translations of oral accounts in promoting films and interviews with the Los Kjarkas have been carried out by the author.

society and its social relationships (Bigenho, 2000, 2012; Turino, 1993, 2008a; Mendoza, 2000, 2008). Raul Romero (2001) explains the role of music in the Andes, stating that: 'music does not exist in a vacuum but it is intermingled with other manifestations of popular culture (festivals, rituals, dance-dramas, and collective memories' (Romero, 2001:5ff).

Los Kjarkas can be seen as part of the folk music culture on the urban cultural and musical scene, which is part of the process that carries with it an intent and a need to preserve and highlight fragments of the folk music culture in the Andes. Folkloric images, memories and stories about certain towns and cities are told on the urban scene, when representations from the Andes are brought to the public. The group is also part of the popular music scene where the artist forms part of a constant marketing of musical productions, including processes of music-making and appropriation.

The questions that I attempt to investigate through the studies on cyberspace are: Why did Los Kjarkas appear in Europa 2012? How did the tour get organised and how can this event be understood in its social and cultural context? To find some answers to these questions I study cultural events that are staged for, and by, the diasporic audience.

Methods used in this study consist of ethnographic field studies. The fieldwork, first of all, entails studies about virtual communities on the Internet which express belongingness to a Latin American community and "Bolivianess" in different ways. The empirical materials about the tour of the group consist primarily of uploaded materials marketing films before the concert, interviews with the group members and their fans and films about performances, all on the Internet. The most important part of the empirical materials consists of films on the Internet (*YouTube*).⁴³ I have also attended one of their live performances in Geneva, Switzerland in October 2012.

The outline of the paper is as follows: first, I present the social and cultural scene including thoughts about how the musical activities as well as diasporic formations can be understood. The groups' position as stars on the popular music scene is addressed. Secondly, marketing strategies which are carried out on the Internet, where Los Kjarkas are involved and make preparations for the upcoming performances are described and analysed. Thirdly, the topic about audience creativities and imaginations is examined. Finally, the outcomes of my study are summarised in a chapter called: 'Prolonging the search for authenticity – between authenticity and innovation'.

43 The films about concerts in Europe are made by fans in performances of Los Kjarkas, marketing films and interviews produced by the group or other professionals/journalists, and documentation about private gatherings and rehearsals of dance groups (in Madrid).

The social and cultural scene

Diasporic life is characterised experiences of displacement. When people move, cultures move with them, and they both have to try to live response to new social settings. This leads to the emergence of what can be called transnational communities, diasporic communities, diasporic groups, diasporic cultures, or diasporic formations. There is a need to rethink terms such as postcolonial histories, national geographies and definitions of cultures (Slobin, 1994; Ramnarine, 2007a, 2007b). The Bolivian diaspora can be understood as an actor within a complex current world system. Ideas about, travels and dwellings are an important part of these social processes (Brah, 2002).

The processes of migration and emigration from Bolivia influence cultural and musical life in places where international or intranational migrants arrive.⁴⁴ The socio-economic conditions and the political situation in Bolivia have contributed to a development, where creative production, influenced by migration and uses of digital media interact in new ways. There are political refugees from the dictatorships of the 1970s and the 1980s who have stayed outside Bolivia. Furthermore, economic poverty has generated increased legal and illegal labour migration to neighbouring countries and to the Western hemisphere, primarily to Europe and the United States.

Bolivian diasporic communities and Latin American immigrants are committed organisers of the dance groups' and musicians' performances in Europe.⁴⁵ Bolivian urban folk music, presented by visiting Bolivian musicians together with the dance groups, which are often locally based groups, has had a great impact on their audiences (Pekkola, 1996, 2007). The characterizations of the music and dances represent a variety of historical, mythic and social meanings. As in Andean fiestas and festivals seen as performances in the Andes, performances in the diaspora can be viewed as collective manifestations where dance groups represent geographical places. During their performances, musicians tell and retell their audiences new and old stories about rural and urban Latin American/Andean societies. These are mediated through the interlinking capacities of the Internet between the performances and audiences/consumers of their music.

The cultural expressions of what is considered Bolivian or Latin American in

44 In Argentina there are about one million Bolivians and there is also a considerable immigrant population in the United States and Europe. Emigration from Bolivia, which has about 10 million inhabitants, has been increasing during recent decades, with about two million Bolivians now living outside Bolivia. See: Censo, 2012 and Pérez (2006a, 2006b). Bolivians are the fourth largest foreign nationality in Spain since 2003; the majority of them came for economic reasons (Oomen Liebers 2010:4). There are about 10,000 Bolivians in Madrid, Barcelona and Geneva.

45 See for instance: <http://www.facebook.com/events/267426720012247/>, Los Kjarkas en Europa, <http://www.bolivianosporelmundo.com/index.php/bolivianos-en/videos-destacados/282-los-kjarkas-en-europa-oct-2012> [2015-12-01] and KJARKAS SUIZA 2012 SALUDOS.avi <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPncGLFO5Yo> [2013-03-05].

the diaspora are produced and reproduced through many cultural events organised by diaspora groups in Europe. The new social media is used as a medium to spread knowledge and information about the performances and what is considered to be “our own culture” which unites the community.⁴⁶

The group: Los Kjarkas

Los Kjarkas is the most successful contemporary, professional, music group in Bolivia and a well-known group in the Latin American context. Their folkloric style is part of a larger cultural development of musical styles, which has emerged in interaction with many musical influences (Pekkola, 1996; Pekkola et al., 2005; Turino, 2008; Kjeldstadli, 2012). Experiences of Bolivian ensembles in neighbouring countries and cosmopolitan centres in Europe have all contributed to the emergence of urban folk music, which nowadays can be considered to be a national emblem (Pekkola, 1996; Turino, 2008).⁴⁷

The group is involved in the star system of the popular music world as defined by Peter Manuel (1988, 1993).⁴⁸ Their repertoire consists of more than 350 songs that are all composed by the group members. The white ponchos they wear, their way of using the musical instruments like an urban group, and the recognisable voices of some of the members of the groups are among the symbolic resources that ensure the continuity of Los Kjarkas's success. One of the reasons for their lasting popularity, even today, is the fact that they have a long experience of the Latin American urban music scene and the Kjarkas style is now well-established and widespread.⁴⁹

Los Kjarkas belong to the period of popular musical history in Bolivia, connected to the growth of mass-media broadcasting and the recording industry. Their music is audience-oriented (Pekkola, 1996). Members of the group in Europe, October 2012, were Elmer Hermosa González (vocals, *charango*, *zampoña*, *quena*), Gastón Guardia Bilboa (vocals, *zampoña*, *quena*), Lin Angulo (first guitar), Makoto Shishido (*charango*), Gonzalo Hermosa Camacho junior (guitar and *zampoña*, *quena*), Jorge Santacruz (bass) and Iván Barrientos (drums).

There was a need to present the younger members of the group, a new genera-

46 See for instance: <http://www.facebook.com/events/267426720012247/>, Los Kjarkas en Europa, <http://www.bolivianosporelundo.com/index.php/bolivianos-en/videos-destacados/282-los-kjarkas-en-europa-oct-2012> [2015-12-01] and KJARKAS SUIZA 2012 SALUDOS.avi <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPncGLFO5Yo> [2013-03-05].

47 See for instance: <https://www.facebook.com/Kjarkas?fref=ts>, [2015-12-01].

48 Studies about Los Kjarkas have been presented by: Wara Céspedes (1993), Pekkola (1996), Guardia Crespo (2001) and Kjeldstadli (2012).

49 The concept of ‘star system’ as a way of developing famous artists is one of the typical characteristics of contemporary urban popular music according to Peter Manuel (1988, 1993).



Los Kjarkas in La Paz, before the tour to Europe.⁵⁰

tion of Los Kjarkas, in the interviews and concerts. In an interview in Madrid, Gastón Guardia Bilboa talks about the new members in the following way:

Los Kjarkas, we have a new period of history, since six-seven years ago, with a new generation, who is here [...]. They are Gonzalo Junior, the nephew of Gonzalo, of Elmer. Lin Angulo is here, the son of great musicians in Bolivia, such as Ana Cristina Céspedes, Javier Angulo. He is our guitar player, the first guitar. Makuto Sushido is also here, he was invited from Japan, ten years ago, to be part of the group. And well, part of our new history.⁵¹

Los Kjarkas, tenemos una nueva etapa de historia, hace como seis- siete años, con una nueva generación, que está acá [...]. Que es el Gonzalo Junior, sobrino de Gonzalo, de Elmer. Esta Lin Angulo, hijo de grandes músicos en Bolivia, como Ana Cristina Céspedes, Javier Angulo. Es nuestro guitarrista, primera guitarra. Y acá también Makuto Sushido, que es invitado desde Japón, desde hace diez años que integra el grupo. Y bueno, es parte de la nueva historia.

After several decades of musical productions and experiences in the popular music world, Los Kjarkas, have developed strategies for marketing their musical activities in Bolivia. The distribution network around their music functions in such a way that they are broadcast on both national radio and television, and recently, also intensively mediated in the digital media.

50 http://www.la-razon.com/la_revista/Kjarkas-inician-Europa-recital-paceno_0_1699030203.html [2013-09-07].

51 IBN- La Rueda de Prensa de los Kjarkas en Madrid, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgNxtBzhyb0&list=PLY9G9NdHybFano0t2gIuuHzkbrMgD85zG>, [2013-04-15].

Preparing and marketing the events

The marketing of the performances in Europe ahead of the tour, was done in different ways. First, the group told about their plans and their forthcoming tour in Europe, to their audience in Bolivia. Then, posters and films (*Youtube films*) were produced. Messages appeared on the Internet, in which musicians talked about their forthcoming performances in Europe. Images, words and music illustrated the plans - what would happen, and when.

In the short films, one or several members welcomed the audience to come to the concerts.⁵² In one of the marketing films, Lin Angulo, one of the musicians of the group, makes the following presentation:

Hello, my brothers and sisters. I am Lin Angulo, the guitar player of the group. We want to invite you all to our great concert, there in Zürich, Geneva. The days October 26, 27, where we will give you our history reflected in our concert. In this way, we hope to share with you.⁵³

Hola mis hermanos, Yo soy Lin Angulo, guitarrista de los Kjarkas. Queremos invitarles a todos, a nuestro gran concierto, allá en Zürich, Ginebra, el día 26, 27 de octubre donde les entregaremos nuestra historia reflejada en nuestro concierto. Así que les esperamos para compartir con nosotros.

In the promotional films, images of the stars are visualised and the audience is informed about upcoming events and possible gatherings of diasporic communities in Europe. Well-known stars appear and they connect the musicians and their music in this way “with the needs/demands/emotions/desires of audiences” as stated by Roy Shuker (1998:187), in his description of the characteristics of marketing of popular music.

Films produced by promoters in Europe also express the ideas of the musicians about what and to whom they are singing. The documentation about the arrival of Los Kjarkas in Europe, combined with an interview with group members, are among these interesting marketing film productions by Eurobolivian media.⁵⁴

52 Marketing films and posters about the concerts in Barcelona, Bonn, Paris, Stockholm, and Switzerland 2012 can be found on the Internet. See for instance: Announcing the concert in Barcelona, <http://www.loskjarkas.com/bolivia/los-kjarkas-se-van-para-europa-del-10-al-28-de-octubre/#comment-> [2015-11-13].

53 KJARKAS SUIZA 2012 SALUDOS.avi, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPncGLFO5Yo> [2013-03-05].

54 Llegada de los Kjarkas a Madrid <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEgPhrBj7gk&feature=g-list&list=PLY9G9NdHybFZXTdeJedwWhQ9tUmVEs3eE> [2013-03-03].



GIRA EUROPEA 2012



Miercoles 10 de Octubre	Llegada a Madrid (España).
Jueves 11 de Octubre	Tenerife (España).
Viernes 12 de Octubre	Zaragoza (España).
Sabado 13 de Octubre	Valencia (España).
Domingo 14 de Octubre	Madrid (España).
Viernes 19 de Octubre	Bonn (Alemania).
Sabado 20 de Octubre	Paris (Francia)
Domingo 21 de Octubre	Barcelona (España)
Jueves 25 de Octubre	Basel (Suiza).
Viernes 26 de Octubre	Zurich (Suiza).
Sabado 27 de Octubre	Ginebra (Suiza) 2 presentaciones.
Domingo 28 de Octubre	Estocolmo (Suecia).
Lunes 29 de Octubre	Retorno a Madrid (España).
Martes 30 de Octubre	Retorno a Bolivia.

The schedule of the tour in 2012.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Kjarkas - web oficial http://www.loskjarkas.com.bo/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=35&Itemid=106&limitstart=11 [2015-10-12]



Los Kjarkas in a Press Conference, Madrid, 2012.⁵⁶

In this film, which was produced for the diaspora, one of the musicians, Gastón Guardia Bilboa, says the following:

GGB: Well, the trip was a bit long, but Los Kjarkas are happy to have just arrived in Spain, especially in Madrid, to sing to our people, to our Bolivian people, who live here and to all our Latin American brothers and sisters, too.⁵⁷

GGB: *Bueno, el viaje un poquito largo, pero felices los Kjarkas de estar nuevamente en España especialmente en Madrid para cantar a nuestra gente, a nuestra gente boliviana que reside acá y todos los hermanos latinoamericanos también.*

Another one of the group's goals during the tour is to present their new songs to the audience:

Interviewer: Can you tell us a bit, what the concert will be about?

GGB: Well, we are back now, after two years. We will give you some new songs, we released a new song two- three days ago. On October 5th, to be exact. It is already launched worldwide,

56 EL ARRIBO DE LOS KJARKAS A MADRID 2012 <http://bolivianosporelmundo.com/index.php/bolivianos-en/videos-destacados/602-el-arribo-de-los-kjarkas-a-madrid-2012> [2015-11-13].

57 IBIN- Rueda de Prensa en Madrid 2012 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgNxtBzhyb0&list=PLY9G9NdHybFano0t2gluuHzkbrMgD85zG> [2013-04-15].

and we will do the premiere, at least four or five songs from this new album. We will do the songs you like, that everyone likes.⁵⁸

PR: *¿Nos puede contar un poco lo que va a ser el concierto?*

GGB: *Bueno, hace dos años que volvimos los Kjarkas, vamos a darles canciones nuevas. Hemos lanzado hace dos tres días el nuevo disco. Exactamente 5 de octubre. Y ya se lanzó al nivel mundial. Y vamos a hacer el estreno, por lo menos cuatro a cinco canciones de este nuevo disco. Y vamos a hacer las canciones que les guste, que les gusten tanto a toda la gente.*

In another interview, Gastón Guardia Bilbao talks about their tour and their goals as follows:

GGB: We just arrived from Bolivia today. Well, we are in our last tour, our 40th anniversary, which is ending here in Europe. We will be touring during the next three weeks in Spain, Germany, France, Switzerland and Sweden [...] twelve concerts that are sure to further unite our Latin American brothers and sisters, especially also Bolivians.⁵⁹

GGB: *Acabamos de llegar hoy día de Bolivia. Bueno, estamos en esta última gira, el aniversario de los 40 años, acabando justamente acá en Europa. Vamos a estar tres semanas recorriendo parte de España, Alemania, Francia, Suiza y Suecia [...] en doce conciertos que seguramente van a unir más a los hermanos latinoamericanos, especialmente a los bolivianos también [...]*

In the concert's soundscape of "Andean feeling", "Bolivianess" is created when songs of the group from different decades are performed in the concerts. In the quotation above, Los Kjarkas "give a voice", for Latin America in Europe, and tell about their experiences. The group travels around and meets the audience whose identity as 'Latin American and Bolivian brothers' may be confirmed.

The refrain of the song *Bolivia* is repeated over and over again in the marketing films on the Internet. Here is one example of a well-known very popular song:

<i>Bolivia</i>	Bolivia
<i>Quiero pegar</i>	I want to shout
<i>un grito de liberación</i>	a cry for liberation
<i>es por el siglo y medio</i>	After a century and half
<i>de humillación</i>	of humiliation. ⁶⁰

58 IBN - Rueda de Prensa de las KJARKAS en Madrid 2012 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgNxtBzhyb0&list=PLY9G9NdHybFanooot2gIuuHzkbrMgD85zG> [2015-12-01].

59 IBN - Rueda de prensa de las Kjarkas en Madrid 2012 - -DKalle <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSc7pTkM6H0> [2015-12-01].

60 Lyrics from the song 'Bolivia', has many symbols which refer to a national identity, hopefulness and a sense of belonging. The lyrics of the song have been interpreted as symbols of a 'national liberation' since 1970s. (Pekkola, 1996) and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPncGLFO5Yo> [2013-03-05].

Elmer Hermosa talks about this above-mentioned song, *Bolivia*, and other favourite songs, which has had a great impact on the audiences over the decades. He also speaks about some other important songs:

This song has become an anthem by now. I think that we have been singing it for 40 years. Another song should be the *Ave de Cristal*. Also *Llorando se fue* [...] the queen of *los sayas*, which not only has stayed in the country, but also it has gone outside our frontiers [...].⁶¹

Es una canción [Bolivia] que ha sido un himno hasta hoy. Yo creo que hasta cuarenta años que seguimos cantando. Y otra canción sería Ave de Cristal. También, Llorando se fue [...] la reina de las sayas que no solamente ha quedado en nuestro país, también ha salido afuera nuestras fronteras.

As mentioned in the quotation above, songs such as *Bolivia*, *Ave de Cristal* and *Llorando se fue* are among the most beloved favourites of the public.⁶² All these songs were performed during the European tour.

Performances – strong feelings and expectations

Cultural and social events organised in the diaspora where Andean music culture is performed can be seen as a way of creating new spaces in the diaspora through cultural performances. New types of local-global relationships are shaped in search of an identity and belongingness. This process is, to a large extent, formed through the travelling musicians, dancers and their encounters with an audience. Music is a product of hybridity and synthesis as expressed by Connell and Gibson (2003:165). Representations of the Bolivian past and present are represented in the performances and the narratives of the group. Diasporic formations combine habits as stated by Thomas Turino (2008b) adding that:

[...] habits from the original home and their new home *and* are influenced by the cultural models from other places in the diaspora. The diasporic sites are unified as a formation by at least symbolically emphasizing their allegiance to their original homeland and by social networks across the sites (Turino, 2008b:118).

In October 2012, performances by Los Kjarkas took place in several European cities. The group performed in Madrid, Barcelona, Pamplona – Valencia, Bonn, Paris, Basel, Zurich, Geneva and Stockholm. In addition, several documents

61 Rueda de Prensa de las Kjarkas, Madrid. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgNxtBzhyb0&list=PLY9G9NdHybFanoot2gIuuHzkbrMgD85zG> [2015-12-01].

62 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSc7pTkM6H0&list=PLY9G9NdHybFb6VIm3OdASUT4tKLM1EIDl&index=10> [2013-03-03].

about them are now permanently in cyberspace, and in a way, these documents continue to live their own life on the Internet.

Diaspora communities consist of a faithful audience and enthusiastic listeners of the music. As the quotations above describe, the group is characterised by an openness to gather a broad spectrum of Latin American listeners. The performances in the diaspora were named “*Los eventos al estilo Andino*” (The events in Andean style).⁶³ Costumed dance dramas are often part of the musical performances.

Announcing the performance in Barcelona in 2013.⁶⁴

63 Interview, Gastón Guardia Bilbao, Barcelona 2012. See: Playlist Kjarkas en Europa 2012: <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLY9G9NdHybFanoor2gIuuHzkbrMgD85zG> [2013-02-06].

64 <http://www.loskjarkas.com/bolivia/los-kjarkas-se-van-para-europa-del-10-al-28-de-octubre/#comment-> [2015-11-13].

Films about the performances of the group started to appear soon after the online performances, and are now uploaded on *YouTube*. Comments about the films can also be found *online*.⁶⁵ Explanatory notes about the concerts have also been published. The interested spectator interacts with others in this way. It is very common that the participants in these kinds of discussions in the cyberspace share their geographical positions. Usually, the name of the specific country (Mexico, Germany, Peru and Argentina, etc.), is mentioned in the comments.

The Bolivian urban music that is staged by musicians in the diaspora is often called national music and is considered to have indigenous origins. Symbols of Andean culture, of the Bolivian multi-ethnic nation, are often represented by the *wiphala* on the stage. At the same time, Bolivian national anthems are also part of the show, as is the Bolivian Flag, which is often in the background. These symbolic signs of unity can be seen as a way of affirming a collective identity (*cf* Connell & Gibson referring to Lipsitz, 1999a:230).

Specific focus is directed to the relationships between Bolivian urban folk music and socio-cultural organisations. In Madrid, specific preparations for the performance were made by the dance groups:

A casting was carried out in Madrid to choose the dance groups in different rhythms to accompany Los Kjarkas in their concert, which will take place 10 October 2012 at the theatre del Parque de Atracciones in Madrid.⁶⁶

Se realizó en Madrid el casting para seleccionar los grupos de bailes en sus diferentes ritmos que acompañarán a la agrupación Kjarkas en su concierto que ofrecerán en Madrid el 10 de octubre 2012 en el teatro del Parque de Atracciones de Madrid.

The activities of musicians and their audiences in the diaspora make important contributions to the process of creating definitions of culture. Questions of identity, origins and belongingness have been explored. A Carnival-like performance is created on the stage and diasporic and postcolonial representations can be understood in this context.

Musicians tell and retell stories on the stage,⁶⁷ and in their performances, the Andean musicians often about life, realities, utopias and societies from the rural Andean past and present. Storytelling evokes both memories and feelings. Dance groups create representations of cultures where members of the diaspora participate.

Los Kjarkas' public performances are often concerts for mass audiences; however, in Europe they were mostly medium size. On the Internet, uploads about smaller concerts and private gatherings can also be found.

65 Films uploaded on Youtube and comments by the fans about the concerts in Europe 2012 can be found.

See: <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLY9G9NdHybFano0t2gIuuHzkbrMgD85zG> [2013-02-06].

66 This casting was carried out 27 September 2012, see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YJd13lCvyc&list=PLY9G9NdHybFZXTdeJedwWhQ9rUmVEs3eE> [2015-03-03].

67 *Cf.* Gilroy who has written about diaspora, music and musicians telling stories (1993:200).

After the live, offline concerts, the films about the performances start to appear on the Internet. The activities of diaspora communities become visualised in this way. The films are often commented on by those who attended and actively participated in the concerts or others who are interested in these performances.⁶⁸ Music uploaded online illustrates the mixture of the musical repertoire of the group and of the great interest of the audience to show the performance.

The audience participates in the performances; they scream when the main vocalists start to sing a well-known song and they applaud. The audience mostly stands up and dances to the music during the concert. Groups can be seen dancing and moving rhythmically in the audience. These songs are well-known and the majority of the audience knows the lyrics very well and participates by singing along actively during the whole performance. The audience participation conveys a strong feeling of togetherness that is created by the stars on the stage, which for a moment is transformed to a place where musicians evoke intensive emotions in their audience which in turn, responds by participating in the performance, standing up, clapping their hands, singing and dancing at an intense event.⁶⁹

Their songs can be considered as being modern creations that have emerged out of a tradition that the group represents. Although the contents of the lyrics are similar to those of a conventional folklore repertoire – love, devotion to regions, towns and cities in Bolivia, etc., there are also songs about freedom, liberation from oppression and about Latin American unity.

Dance groups of Bolivian organisations participate in the performances. This was, for instance, the case in Bonn, where the *grupo Awayu* from Hamburg had a great impact.⁷⁰

The group performs a number of songs about the different regions in Bolivia during the tour. In this way the transnational community gets an imagined connection to a place-bound identity. In their performances, songs with geographic references to Bolivia such as towns and cities; for instance there are songs about places as *Oruro* and *Chuquiago Marka* which are performed which create a feeling of belongingness. They create great enthusiasm and enjoy.

There are songs in their repertoire, such as *Llorando se fue*, a *saya*, and now the song *Tiempo al Tiempo*, which have caused a struggle for copyrights and ‘ownership of a culture’, as it has been the case with the songs. The first named song was transformed to *Lambada* and had a great international impact. At the same time, this means that there is a global dimension in their repertoire; the local music has been transformed to globally mediated music in this way.⁷¹ According to Gastón

68 See: <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLY9G9NdHybFano0t2gIuuHzkbrMgD85zG>

69 Mass concerts of the group in Latin America are often organised at sport stadiums with huge audiences.

70 LOS KJARKAS - ‘El Último Amanecer’ Tobas Bonn-Alemania 19 October 2012 wmv <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LE4h1oZE6I> [2013-01-11].

71 For discussion about the copyright of the song, see: Los Kjarkas dejan que se investigue posible plagio <http://www.opinion.com.bo/opinion/articulos/2012/0929/noticias.php?id=72776> [2015-012-01].

Guardia Bilbao, the song, *Llorando se fue*⁷² is still a great success:

I think that *Llorando se fue* was born under a lucky star. This song was recorded in the year 1980, and well, I think that it was popular from the beginning. Especially in Bolivia, it was “the number one song” for two years. Then, it went to Peru, to Ecuador, to Brazil, [...] *Cuarteto Imperial* recorded it. So many artists. Then, it was *la Lambada* with the trial for two years, it created respect to what is authorship and the Latin American composer. And then once more, the song was performed by Jennifer López, Don Omar, and many other artists. It was also recorded in Japan. We think that this song has something great. We think that Bolivians also are great and we can give to the world this song [...] And now the song, *Tiempo al tiempo*, with the African *reggaetonero* sound, which has now been recorded. I think Bolivia has a lot to give to the world with our music [...].⁷³

Creo que Llorando se fue ya nació con una estrella. Esta canción la grabamos el año 80 y bueno creo que desde su inicio gustó muchísimo. Especialmente en Bolivia fue “la canción número uno” durante dos años. Después entró al Perú, a Ecuador, a Brasil [...] lo grabaron Cuarteto Imperial. Tantos artistas. [...] Después vino la Lambada con el juicio más de dos años, que se ganó, también se hizo respetar la autoría del hombre y el compositor más que todo latinoamericano. Y después otra vez la canción, lo toma Jennifer López, Don Omar, y muchos otros artistas. En el Japón también lo grabaron. Creemos que realmente tiene algo grande esta canción. Y pensamos que los bolivianos también somos grandes y podemos dar al mundo esta canción [...] Y ahora es la canción “Tiempo al tiempo” que se está escuchando, con el reggaetonero africano que se está escuchando que lo grabaron. Creo que Bolivia puede dar mucho con nuestra música [...]



Los Kjarkas on the stage in Geneva, October 2012. ⁷⁴

72 The nationwide and international popularity of this song is specially discussed in a TV program, see: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3Onp1OBikk&list=PLY9G9NdHybFb6VIm3OdASUT4tKlM\(...\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3Onp1OBikk&list=PLY9G9NdHybFb6VIm3OdASUT4tKlM(...)) 1EID1

73 Rueda de prensa de las Kjarkas en Madrid 2012 - - DKalle <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSc7pTkM6H0> [2015-12-01].

74 Por Un Sueño De Amor -suite - LOS KJARKAS en vivo (Tour Europa 2012). <https://www.youtube.com/embed/jVkl1RdgX6pU> [2015-11-13].

An important effect is created in some songs by mixing languages. Quechua and Spanish are used in for instance in songs such as *Munasquechay* and Spanish and Japanese is used in *Llorando se fue*. These songs can be seen as symbols that in turn shape an image about the transnational character of the group.

The audience and the fans

Social relationships and the distance between the artists and the audience have changed fundamentally since the advent of the Internet, which has the capacity to spread music everywhere, and to almost everybody (Buckley & Shephard, 2003). Many admirers of this music, as is the case with many other popular musical styles audiences, are *aficionados* or fans of this popular music.

Bolivian musicians in the diaspora are represented in the genre of folk/ popular music, and in a way it is possible to stage music for a wider audience and expand the understanding of Latin American music. Communities of fans expect the musicians to come to them. This music culture may thus also be seen as an important aspect of furthering a diasporic cultural identity. Complex reactions to this music appear in the responses by the fans. Fan responses may be seen as elements in the web of cultural connections and vehicles for 'promoting new national and transnational identities' (Connell & Gibson, 2003:187). Marc Slobin (1994:248) has stated that the staging of music can be seen as a contribution to 'the definition of the diaspora'.

The sense of belongingness to the popular music world and the Latin American/Andean/Bolivian community may be confirmed through visits by musicians and participating in cultural events that are on the screen. Being known as *fans* of Los Kjarkas may be affirmed or reaffirmed through an act of uploading films or writing comments on the websites. These comments on the Internet (*YouTube*) about the images are interactive. The number of visitors on a particular website is counted, and each film tells us about the number of anonymous spectators, who may really be committed fans or only slightly interested *voyeurs*.

Admirers of the music may also actively remark on a group's music and its performances on the websites or by writing to the musicians themselves. Here are some statements from two music lovers who comment about an upload:

'My best dream'.

'It is wonderful, thousand thanks for uploading this video, it is beautiful, congratulations.'⁷⁵

Mi sueño mayor.

Es una preciosura mil gracias por subir este video, es una belleza, felicitaciones.

An admirer of the group says the following in an interview before going to a performance in Madrid:

I am waiting here faithfully. After six years when I could not come because of the work I have, but now, I'm finally here.

QUESTION: What are your expectations of the concert?

To feel, what is our country. Feel what is our land here.⁷⁶

Yo de verdad estoy esperando aquí, después de seis años que llevo aquí

No he podido venir por el trabajo que tengo, ahora al fin

PREGUNTA: ¿Qué es lo espera del concierto?

Sentir lo que es nuestro país. Lo que es nuestra tierra aquí.

Various patterns of interaction between the audience and those who have access through the Internet contribute to an understanding within the cultural pathways in the diaspora. The emergence of these cultural patterns means to make a link as explained by Slobin: "diasporas with homelands and those that suture minorities to mainstreams within nation-states" (Slobin, 1994:245). Music may play an active role in affirming a sense of belongingness. Perhaps by extension, these activities signify a feeling of self-esteem for the diasporic citizens, as mentioned by the musicians. The experiences of diasporic groups are often connected to the concept of place, places or placelessness in different ways. It may be a question of articulating a taste in both individuals and groups, as Slobin (1994:244) points out. Diasporic communities mark distinctions, whether about what is "ours/theirs, mine/ours, yours/mine, yesterday/today and here/there and other distinctions that bring in gender and generation", as stated by Slobin (1994:244).

75 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tQHZXNo8SI&list=PLY9G9NdHybFZXTdeJedwWhQ9tUmVEs3eE&feature=mh_lolz [2013-02-06].

76 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgviXEDdcbA&list=PLY9G9NdHybFano0t2gIuuHzkbrMgD85zG> [2013-02-06].

Prolonging the search for authenticity – between authenticity and innovation

<i>Me duelen tus palabras</i>	Your words hurt me
<i>con que matas mis ilusiones</i>	with them you kill my illusions
<i>donde muere ilusiones</i>	where the illusions die
<i>miles de sueños</i>	thousands of dreams, and
<i>miles se mueren</i>	thousands die. ⁷⁷

This study may be viewed as an attempt to understand musicians that take part in ‘twists and turns of global music flows’ (Manuel, 1983); a description of two-way processes, where “centre and periphery are constantly confused” as pointed out by Erlman (2003:244). The relationship may still be analysed in terms of how a music culture is developed from the margins, and how it defines itself in relationship to a dominant culture, which is understood as the global and Western culture. It is also a question of defining new social and cultural identities in the diaspora and how to challenge the homogenising dynamics of global culture.

Los Kjarkas is considered as being the most important group in influencing the change of the negative attitudes towards popular music in Bolivia. The group is well aware of what they represent; they perform “an interplay between a claim to both authenticity and innovation” (Wara Céspedes, 1993:59) on the stage. They have been, and are, among a number of innovative groups from the late 1970s who opened the minds of the urban audience in Bolivia (Wara Céspedes, 1984; Pekkola, 1996; Guardia Crespo, 2001). Now, their touring in Europe has another impact and meaning. The new group of Los Kjarkas is part of the New Andean Folk music, now touring around the globe. A new generation of the Los Kjarkas is on its way to being able to exert some degree of influence the performance practice and the repertoire of the group. But the members of the group compose all the music that was performed. In this sense their music is authentic. Los Kjarkas has reached a global and nationwide popularity.

The stardom of the group signifies their role as a kind of “cultural intermediaries”. The cultural activities may be interpreted as part of the undertakings of the intermediaries whose cultural practices and discourses “are more than just manifestations and discourses of some anonymous capitalist world system or the global music industry” as expressed by Veit Erlman (2003:244). Many songs in their repertoire give the audience sense of unity, they create a magic feeling of social cohesiveness. The audience gets an opportunity to identify, as in other Andean music cultural contexts themselves as a social group rather than as “culturally expatriated individuals” (Romero, 2000:105). Tina Ramnarine (2007a) points out that: “Music in the diaspora likewise suggests we radically rethink the ‘place’ of ‘culture’, and if we also discard ‘ethnicity’, we can take another look at knowledge

77 Lyrics from the song *Tiempo al tiempo*, Los Kjarkas.

at peoples, places and reified domains of culture” (Ramnarine, 2007a:8).

In a way the musicians initiate a discussion about what can be considered as Bolivian, Andean, and/or Latin American with the fans before the performance as well as during it. The repertoire in the performances is adapted to what the Eurobolivian and Eurolatin audience needs and wants to hear.

The relationship between the Bolivian diaspora and Bolivian urban folk music can be understood in the context of the economic, political and cultural changes that contribute to contemporary patterns of migrancy and the diaspora. Questions about “fixing authenticity” and “mixing influences” where “senses of displacement and dislocation, mediated with memories of the people and places of home with the realities of new surroundings” (Connell & Gibson, 2003:161) can be brought up. In new public spaces, “marginalised interests can be debated and articulated” (Connell & Gibson, 2003:253). The conservation of a sense of continental belongingness and the significance of a national culture, as well as what ‘here and there’ means, is articulated by the musicians and their audiences in Carnival-like celebrations. Real places, as in the song *Oruro*, and mythological places, as in the song *Chuquiago Marka*, are imagined through the symbols used in the lyrics of these songs. References to feelings of loss and longing are expressed in many of the songs by Los Kjarkas.

The musicians can be seen as “cultural intermediaries”, as mentioned before, expressing the full range of folk and popular national and transnational, Latin American music and identities in a diasporic context. Belongingness to “there” through images and memories is articulated through their music. The group expresses the need for defining place and belongingness to an Andean past and Latin American present. In this way, the musicians as contemporary artists and stars are staging representations of an imagined Latin America and an Andean representation of identity for their audiences. Their performances contribute to reproduce a culture by telling stories about traditions and sentiments. They stage representations of ancient and contemporary cultures, which at the same time express feelings of betrayal and loss. The lyrics of songs such as *Fria* and *Munasquechay*, which are performed in the tour, tell about feelings of disappointments and love.

Performing Bolivian folk dances on Europe’s stages, Los Kjarkas reproduces representations of Andean identities and affirms a sense of belongingness to it, in many different ways. The Bolivian diaspora expresses contemporary cultural needs and redefines concepts such as here/there, ours/theirs, etc. They have the opportunity to “create their own spaces” at cultural events, which can be seen as ritual celebrations of a nation (Bolivia) and a continent (Latin America).

The work of the musicians and dancers signify the affirmation and reaffirmation of an identity, which may otherwise be marginalised. Following the central arguments of this paper, the musicians and their audiences are continually discovering and rediscovering a dominated culture, as well as creating different forms of diasporic culture in virtual spaces. Common experiences extend this unity

within the group in the diasporic context. This can be compared with Slobin's statement about 'forming a particular crucial point of articulation in viewing diasporic life' (Slobin, 1994:244). What is often viewed as authentic music of the Andean region is performed in the diaspora, providing a means to frame the self within a diasporic context.

The members of the group compose all the music that is performed. In this sense their music is authentic. At the same time, hybridity and expressions of hybrid cultures, where elements of rural/urban cultures or local global cultures and the issue of the relationship between traditional and modern, can be explored. The new generation of Los Kjarkas includes electronic guitar (Bas) and drums in the *conjunto* (instead of *bombo* or *wankara*). Nonetheless, this does not change the feeling of authentic folk music and the image of 'authentic innovation', which surrounds the group.

In the 21st century, diasporic groups act as organisers of their social and cultural events. At the diasporic crossroads, musicians and cultural groups stage cultural representations and re-appropriate a culture. As popular music in the contemporary music world, this music is less and less dependent on national boundaries; boundary crossing is an on-going phenomenon during a tour. The activities of the diasporic organisations can be seen as manifestations of the potential creative energy that may emerge in contexts of a migrant culture, which can be considered as being part of transnational cultural activities in contemporary Europe where identities can be affirmed and communities of fans can be gathered. Transnational circuits and diasporic formations may, thus, contribute to new social networks with specific goals that are established at the local, national and transnational levels.

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