

MarKamusic Biography

MarKamusic means "Music of the people" in Andean Quechua, the most widely spoken native language of the Americas (about 20 million people). Markamusic is also a high-energy, multi-national musical ensemble that performs Latin music deeply rooted within the folkloric, popular and traditional genres of Latin America, the Caribbean and South American Andean regions. These regions comprise distinctively different zones and lands. From the wind barren high plateaus of the Andes; the mystical Amazon rain forest, the heat of the Caribbean islands and the deserted coasts washed by the Pacific Ocean, Latin America spans a whole varied and diverse continent. MarKamusic sensibly brings the musical forms and the soulful art of the cultures and countries from these regions. An ever changing, eclectic weave of ancient, modern, aboriginal and pop themes performed on a fascinating array of native, western and African influenced instruments. Like its ancestors before them, MarKa musicians draw from the well of their unique cultural past: Inca, Taino, Maya, African and Spanish/European.

Since its inception in 1999, As a Peruvian and Andean folk music quintet, MarKa embraced the responsibility that an ethnic artist must have to its own people, history and music. Freddy Chapelliquen , MarKa's founder, with the help of brothers Ahmed and Rene Gonzalez and brothers Ryan and Marlon Bazan, decided to emphasize the musical and social contributions of the four major cultural influences that had shaped the modern, folk and traditional South and Latin American music they were so accustomed to hearing: the indigenous, the West African, the Euro-Iberian, and the United States. Traditional rhythms and music forms from these diverse cultures had slowly fused over the centuries, creating that which is today's Latin American traditional, folk and popular musics. MarKa's careful choice of repertoire and instrumentation was then to reveal this historic evolution to its audiences. In the mid 2000's the members started to considered the possibility of taking their music to a more eclectic, encompassing and experimental realm in order to replicate what was occurring in the music world in Latin America at the time.

The ensemble was then headquartered in western Massachusetts. Between Amherst and Springfield to be more precise. In 2005 they became a seven piece group and included many more western influenced instruments and rhythms. Deeply moving at times or full of fresh and ancient energy at others, MarKa's music called out to rekindle the senses of our human collective memory while trying to carry the audience across a panorama of musical history millennia: From the delicate sounds of Quechua and Aymara bamboo flute melodies to very high energy Caribbean numbers. Western-European wind instruments, African influenced instruments, and jazz drums also found its way into their music complementing the bamboo flutes and diminutive Indian guitars of the folkloric musicians in marvelous, if sometimes off-beat ways.

Since then, MarKamusic's repertoire has emerged as a combination of many themes: mainly their own music, but also reinterpretations of ancient Inca, Aymara and Quechua aboriginal melodies; songs arising from the nineteenth-century South American struggle for independence; the rarely heard treasures and sometimes jarring and hypnotic Afro-South American music such as the Música Negroide of Peru or the Candombe music from Uruguay; of Latin folk-rock protest music-banned in the mid 1970s under pain of death by the military Juntas; and a handful of favorite Latin-American torch songs and high-energy pop tunes-the kind you might hear blaring out of jukeboxes in small-town luncheonettes and bars in say, Peru or Colombia. The sum of it all is that chairs are often empty or kicked over at the end of the performance and everyone is up on their feet, prancing or kicking about like crazy or taking part in a madcap, coiling conga-line.

MarKamusic tailors its presentations to the educational interests of each audience. By varying the length of the informative commentaries preceding each number, a MarKamusic performance can indeed be a guided tour of Latin American musical forms or a complete carefree festival of musical delights. The ensemble Marka has released four albums to date, with much success. Their most recent: Unspoken Union, is a tribute to much of this history, the union of many cultural and musical influences that is well represented within the different backgrounds and countries of origin of its members as well as the historical evolution of Latino music.