

tonality, modulation, counterpoint, crescendo, diminuendo, accelerando, and rallentando. Sahagún and other historians confirm these practices and stress that it was customary for the Aztec hierarchy to order compositions for special occasions according to the character of the event. As we have seen, these works were not only simple songs and chants but also entire dance dramas with music, songs, dances, and dialogues, performed by the nobleman's own corps of musicians, dancers, and actors.

As in Asiatic and European cultures, music in Meso-America was supposed to have had a divine origin, and according to the *Popol Vuh* (1950, p. 208), ceremonial flutes figured among the ritual objects used by Nacxit (Quetzalcoatl) during the coronation of reigning dignitaries. One of these flutes, probably of Toltec origin, is very old and is made of bone with engravings in which appears the totem—a double-headed deer—of the great Toltec ruler, Mixcóatl.

Precortesian music may be classified into the following categories: magic, hunting or totemic, ritual, therapeutic, war, ceremonial for religious and civic festivals, profane or secular, imitative music (usually of birds), folk music, and religious chants. According to Carlos Chavez, the last of these are the most highly developed. There are also categories of intimate or personal music, such as love and death songs and erotic music.

Study of the surviving indigenous music reveals important characteristics of precortesian music. These can be summed up as follows:

- The use of introductions and interludes.
- Preoccupation with exact tuning (musicians always retune their instruments before beginning a new tune).
- Thematic unity.
- Melodic variety.
- Use of variation and antiphonal patterns.
- Use of accents, usually in the accompanying percussion, which do not coincide with the melodic pattern but which lend zest and variety to the rhythm.
- Use of combined meters and accents, but avoiding the exaggerated, syncopated rhythms characteristic of Afro-Cuban music.
- Use of cadences, either rhythmical or melodic.
- Use of bridges or transitions employing diminuendo-rallentando or crescendo-accelerando effects as a modulatory device (as a rule the rasping stick or drum gradually works up to the new tempo and melody).
- Employment of ostinato or repetition of a rhythmical motif.

H5. Maya clay flute, producing the C major diatonic scale. From Isla de Jama Campeche. Length 9 1/2".