



# CAÑA QUEMA

## Familia Valera Miranda (1997)



### POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Traditional Cuban styles
- Spanish (European) influences
- West African influences

### 'SE QUEMA LA CHUMBAMBÀ' AND 'ALLA VÁ CANDELA'

#### STRUCTURE:

- Se quema la chumbambà: 4 bar cuatro intro presenting guajeo, 8 bar varying pregon verses, 8 bar fixed coro refrains. cuatro solo, bongo improvisation, short coda based on coro refrain.
- Alla vá candela: 2 Sections: Bolero and son.

#### HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- No modulations
- Se quema la chumbambà: Diatonic G minor. Just chords I and V7 used in a regular 4 bar repeated pattern. Frequent use of Eb note over D7 chord slightly richens harmony. Cuatro solo uses wider range of chords. eg. major subdominant chord.
- Alla vá candela: Diatonic E major. Wider range of chords in bolero section, where I and V are varied with IV and V of V. Son section reverts to I and V chords. Cuatro solo uses chromatic inflections in melodic line, and chord extensions eg. E6 and B7/9 chords.

#### CONTEXT:

- Familia Valera Miranda are a group of musicians from Cuba that perform traditional Cuban music handed down through generations of their ancestors, many of whom were Spanish immigrants.
- Have toured in Europe, USA and Canada since 1995, gaining worldwide success.
- Both songs are in the genre of the son, which is a fusion of Spanish and African elements and the most important Cuban musical form. It became popular during the 1920s.
- West African elements: Syncopation, layered rhythms, call and response, percussion.
- Spanish (European) elements: functional chords, guitar, cuatro and double bass.
- 'Se quema la chumbambà': A son montuno (rural origin) that narrates an incident when a piece of land caught fire. The song is about an incident in the family's history when a piece of land caught fire. It is a son montuno
- 'Alla vá candela': A cuban bolero with a son section that expresses the intense joys of love.

#### RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- Se quema la chumbambà: Disguised 1st beat in syncopated 2 beats in a bar, son clave 3:2 rhythm. Anticipation bass, triplets, vocal phrases begin on 2nd crotchet.
- Alla vá candela: Transcribed into 4/4 – but Cuban boleros are in duple time, Son section in two in a bar metre, at 90 bpm. 2:3 clave rhythm, occasionally moving to the 3:2 clave, sections of irregular length. Bass line plays 'square' rhythm in bolero and syncopated line during the son.
- Vocal lines are syncopated, creating complex cross- rhythms. Cuatro solo most complicated rhythmically with frequent syncopations, triplets, hemiolas and rapid quaver figurations.

#### MELODY:

- Se quema la chumbambà: Main cuatro 'riff': 2 sequentially related phrases with rising and falling thirds. Balanced 2 and 4 bar phrases characterise vocal melody. Cuatro solo uses wide range and all the notes of harmonic G minor scale. Chromatic C# frequent.
- Alla vá candela: Cuatro melody and vocal idea A share same shape and structure, triadic, stepwise motion. Initial rising 4th is repeated. Vocal idea B appears once, is lower and moves largely by step. Vocal idea C: wider range- 8ve in its first phrase and then descends to starting note. Vocal is repetition of tonic chord notes and outer note of dominant chord. 2 bar cuatro guajeo uses larger intervals and notes outside the harmony. Cuatro solo is very flexible melodically: triadic shapes, stepwise motion, larger leaps, chromatic scale.

#### SONORITY:

- Lead vocals, Chorus vocals, Guitar, Cuatro, Maracas, bongos, claves.
- All-male vocal group: Pregon improvises verses and Coro refrains fixed parts.
- Syllabic vocal setting.
- Se quema la chumbambà: limited vocal range.
- Alla vá candela: wider range for lead vocals in the bolero section but more restricted in the son section. Chorus restricted to repeated octaves on E.
- Cuatro: A mixture of solo melodic lines and strummed chords, Plays guajeo, acting as intro and accompaniment. Solos are more virtuosic, covering a wider range, including slides, chords and individual notes.
- Guitar: chordal, accompaniment role in both songs, syncopated block chords while the plucked double bass plays a a short line.
- Percussion: Continuous maracas quavers and improvised bongo patterns, held together by 3:2 and 2:3 son clave rhythms.