

SEXTETOS CUBANOS

ARHOLLE CD 7003
FOLKLYRIC

SEXTETO MUNAMAR: Claves: Antonio Piñera Cuartales; maracas: Eulalio Kessel; guitarra: Diego Pedroso; tres: probably Juan Suárez; contrabajo: Unknown; bongó: Unknown; corneta: Félix Chappottín Lage. All seven selections recorded in Havana, Cuba on June 21, 1930.

1. ACUERDATE BIEN, CHALECO (Remember Well, Vest) (Rosendo Ruiz) (HV33006, 41377)
2. VENGAN, VENGAN (Come, Come All) (Arr.: Antonio Ruiz Y Alvarez) (HV32986, 41377)
3. ENTRE TODAS LAS MUJERES (Amongst All Women) (Roberto De Moya) (HV33003, 41318)
4. CRUCE LOS MARES (I Crossed The Seas) (Antonio Piñera) (HV33002, 41220)
5. CHAQUETON (Overcoat) (Diego Pedroso) (HV32988, 41220)
6. LUCUMI (Lucumi) (Juan Suárez) (HV33004, 41345)
7. YIBIRI (Yibiri) (Antonio Piñera) (HV32987, 41345)

SEXTETO MACHIN: Claves/maracas: Antonio Lugo Machín; claves: probably Pedro "Piquito" Marcano (NYC recordings); guitarra: Daniel Sánchez; tres: Alejandro Rodríguez a/k/a "Mulato" (Havana recordings); cuatro: Yayito Maldonado (NYC recordings); contrabajo: possibly Gustavo; bongó: probably Manuel Reinoso; trompeta con sordina: Remberito "El Chino" Lara (NYC recordings). Havana cornetist and *maraquero* unknown. "Sorteo De La Caridad" features Antonio Machín; guitarra: Daniel Sánchez; tres: Félix Ganuza; and trompeta: Victor Montes de Oca.

8. NO ES CUENTO, NO (It's Not A Story, Really!) (Carlos Anido), Havana, 9/12/29, (HV30468, 40857)
9. ME VOY A BARACOA (I'm Going To Baracoa) (Antonio Machín), Havana, 6/18/30, (HV32982, 41118)
10. REINA GUAJIRA (Guajira Queen) (Alejandro Rodríguez), Havana, 6/18/30, (HV32994, 41118)
11. EL CAMISON DE PEPA (Pepa's Shirdress) (Pedro Flores) NYC 6/3/30 (E32941, 41047)
12. FUEGO EN LA MAYA (Fire In La Maya) (Ignacio Piñeiro) NYC 6/3/30 (E32939, 41046)
13. MAMA YO QUIERO UN YOYO (Mamma, I Want A Yoyo) (Alemán y Valcayo) NYC 6/3/30 (E32938, 41046)



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Sextetos Cubanos

SONES 1930



Sexteto Munamar
Sexteto Nacional

Sexteto Machin
Sexteto Matancero

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(Continued from booklet back)

14. AVELLANA Y MANI (Hazelnuts And Peanuts) (Alfredo Boloña), Havana, 6/18/30 (HV32981, 41251)
15. A ORILLAS DEL YUMURI (On The Banks Of The Yumuri) (Alejandro Rodríguez), Havana, 9/12/29 (HV30467, 40857)
16. EL REY MANOLO (King Manolo) (Alejandro Rodríguez), Havana, 6/18/30 (HV32995, 41318)
17. SORTEO DE LA CARIDAD (Lottery Drawing) (Manuel Castillo) as by Septeto Machín NYC 11/29/35 (BS98340) (Vi75538A & 32671A)
18. CASERITA (Housewife) (Alejandro Rodríguez), Havana, 6/18/30, (HV32996, 41251)

SEXTETO NACIONAL: Claves: Alfredo Valdés Valdés; maracas: Bienvenido León Chacón; guitarra: Eutimio Constantín Guillarte; tres: Francisco González Solares a/k/a "Panchito Chevrolet"; contrabajo: Ignacio Piñero Martínez; bongó: Miguel Angel Portillo a/k/a "Abuelito"; corneta: Lázaro "El Pecos" Herrera Díaz. Recorded in Havana June 19, 1930.

19. SUAVECITO (Gently) (Ignacio Piñero) (HV32990, 41092)
20. INCITADORA REGION (Inciting Region) (Ignacio Piñero) (HV32992, 41092)

SEXTETO MATANCERO: Claves: probably Julio Govín; maracas: probably Barbarito Diez; guitarra: Graciano Gómez Vargas; tres: Isaac Oviedo; contrabajo, bongó: unknown, corneta: Serafín Terry. The remaining unidentified personnel may include: Juan Cisneros and Eugenio Pérez. Recorded in Havana June 23, 1930.

21. SON A LA MUJER CUBANA (*Son To Cuban Women*) (Graciano Gómez) (HV33017, 41216)
22. A UNA MATANCERA (To A Matanzas Woman) (Graciano Gómez) (HV 33007, 41216)
23. LA VIDA NO RETOÑA (Life Cannot Be Relived) (Graciano Gómez) (HV33018, 41230)
24. ¿DE DONDE SERAN? (Where Are They From?) (Graciano Gómez) (HV33008, 41230)

Cover photo: Septeto Nacional - 1938. Back row, left to right: Lázaro "El Pecos" Herrera Díaz - *trompeta*; Eutimio Constantín Guillarte - *guitarra*; Oscar Vilarta - *contrabajo*; Francisco González Solares a/k/a "Panchito Chevrolet" - *tres*. Front row, left to right: Joséito Núñez - *claves*; Ramón Castro a/k/a "Ramoncito" - *bongó*; Marcelino Guerra Abreu a/k/a "Rapindey" - *maracas*. Photo courtesy of Michael Iván Avalos.

Sextetos Cubanos

The first six recordings of *son* by a *sexteto de son* were made on February 8, 1918 by the Sexteto Habanero Godínez. After some reorganization and incorporation with other contemporary *son* groups, a new Sexteto Habanero was reformed in November, 1919.

It was not until the advent of electrical recording that these pioneers of the *son* recorded on October 29 and November 2, 1925 the first four genuine examples of *son* by a *sexteto*.

A series of factors contributed to the popularity of the *sexteto* until its decline after 1931: First, the abundance of *sextetos* and their preference on the part of the Cuban public over trios and other *son* orchestrations. Second, the *sextetos'* answer to the rival *danzonete* was the *sonsonete*. Third, after 1928, the popularity of *Son-pregones*, *Guajira-sones* and *Sones-Lucumí* which augmented the *sextetos'* repertoire. Fourth, the inexhaustible activities of the Sexteto Habanero and Sexteto Nacional, not only in the recording studio, on film and radio, but also as representatives of their country in expositions abroad. Fifth, the sessions heard here from 1929 and

1930, exposed the Cuban public and the world to more obscure *sextetos*. By 1926, the three most renowned *sextetos* on the island: Sexteto Habanero, Sexteto Boloña and Sexteto Occidente, had made special trips to the States to record. (The best of Sexteto Habanero and most of the recordings by Sexteto Boloña are available on Arhoolie/Folklyric C 9053, C 9054 and CD 7006.)

The *sones* played by the *sextetos* consist of three sections: first, the *preludio* which is divided into two short sections of about equal length. This is followed by the *largo*, the longest section of the *son*, yet another prelude and finally the *montuno*. The two *preludios* are strictly instrumental. During the first era of *sones* before October 1927 (when the *corneta* had not yet been adapted to the *sexteto* orchestration), the *tres* alone stated the melody. Later, the *corneta* shared the responsibility. In these early *sones*, the *largos* were simple four-lined stanzas, *cuartetas*, usually a *bolero-son* or *canción*, (romantic ballad), and the *montunos* were either improvisations between a soloist and chorus or just a one or two-lined verse repeated several times by

the three-man chorus. By May, 1928, the first *guajira-sones* introduced the ten-lined verse or *décima* and by the following year a series of *son-pregones* and *sones* with deep Afro-Cuban religious content completely radicalized the *sextetos'* repertory. An early *son* by the Sexteto Habanero, *Yo No Tumbo Caña* (9/3/26), (see Folklyric 9054) typifies the simplicity of that period. The *largo* is a *cuarteta* repeated four times. The lyrics of the *sones* on this CD demonstrate its literary development from this earlier period and contain themes and compositional forms written by a higher caliber of authors.

In the *montuno* there is a relaxed acceleration in tempo in which the soloist, usually the *clavero* and a chorus (the *maraquero* and *guitarrista*) interchange inspirations and repetitive responses, climaxing with a trademark closing. The *montuno* is the repetitive response of the chorus. The titles of the *sones* could reflect either the *largo* or *montuno*. *Largos* and *montunos* were mixed and matched to create a vast repertoire.

The most popular theme of the *sones* is love and romance. These *sones* were quite often impassioned elegies to a woman's beauty. Since all were written

by men about women, they were, despite their sincerity, one-sided expressions of love. There are over thirty early *sones* named after proper names of women. There is not one romantic *son* named after a man or written by a woman and sung by her in the first person. The subject was always a jealous woman, unfaithful and ungrateful; and always the man being rejected and carrying the burden.

The worst example of this is *Fuego En La Maya*. In the *montuno* the vulgar usage of the verb *templé* refers to sexual intercourse. The singer details his womanizing affairs with a *china*, *negra* and *parda* expresses the protagonist's obsession with sexual conquest and possession. In *El Camisón De Pepa*, the *camisón*, shirtdress is reminiscent of a modern day hot pants or a miniskirt. Finally, in *Mamá Yo Quiero Un Yoyo*, the yoyo, is a double-entendre for a woman's genitalia. "Boys, married men and fiancés" enjoy playing with it and in conforming with society's chauvinist sexual mores, a "promiscuous" girl is chastised by her mother and left to blame for her broken yoyo.

Other themes in *sones* were those depicting a native way of life or report-

ing on daily incidents as with public lotteries in *Sorteo De La Caridad*. Another prevalent theme is humor, sometimes satirical, picaresque, mocking or simply comical as in *Yíbiri*: "...Cuando vi por el espejo una luz que me alumbraba Sentí que me caminaba por la barriga un cangrejo...". "...When I saw through the mirror a light that shined upon me I felt a crab crawling on my belly..." Humor can even take the form of a maxim, again in *Yíbiri*: "...La jutía en los manglares se esconde y desaparece. La mujer que bota un hombre siete coronas merece..." "...The hutia (a rodent) hides and disappears in the mangroves. The woman who dumps her man deserves seven crowns..." Another common theme is patriotism and cultural nationalism. *Crucé Los Mares*, *De Dónde Serán*, *Incitadora Región* and *Son A La Mujer Cubana* all fit this category. In this last *son*, Cuba's natural scenic beauty, its radiant, tropical sun, its beautiful women and its universally praised music are all paid homage to in its text.

During the golden era of the *sextetos'* vogue, various *sextetos* wrote self-exalting group theme songs which either spotlighted an individual member or the *sexteto* as a whole. A culture of *pullas*

or jibes ensued pitting groups against each other. Included are two classic examples: *El Rey Manolo* and *¿De Dónde Serán?* The Sexteto Cuba de Fernando Collazo recorded *El Principe Marino* in which their bongo player, Marino González, is showcased: "...El bongó se ha puesto bravo y quiere cantar. ¡Va Cantar! ¡Qué bueno, bueno está el bongosero! ¡Silencio!" "...The bongo player has gotten angry and wants to solo. He's going to solo! Listen, the bongo player plays well!" In a polite jest, the Sexteto Machín later recorded their pulla *El Rey Manolo* heard here. "...El bongó se va a inspirar y no se ha puesto bravo. ¡Oigan! Manolito, el bongosero, escribirá su nombre". "...The bongo player is going to get inspired and he hasn't gotten restless. Listen! Manolito, the bongo player, will demonstrate his style." Their *bongó* isn't irritated or impatient before it's his turn to marvel spectators.

By 1928, scores of musicians and composers forming trios and *Estudiantinas*, groups originating from Oriente province and identical to the *sextetos* except that their instrumentation included a *güiro* and substituted the *bongó* for a *paila* or *timbal*, plus contained up to three extra *guitarristas*,

emigrated to the capital city of Havana. They brought with them a deeply-rooted pride in and nostalgia for Oriente. A historic regional rivalry was sparked. This debate was based on the premise that the *son* is native of Oriente on the one hand, and on the other that it had assimilated a new character by the twenties - that of its new home. By the new decade of the thirties, public opinion had shifted. Graciano Gómez, guitarist for the Sexteto Matancero, responded with his *pulla* *¿De Dónde Serán?* - his verdict to this dispute. (#24) (This *pulla* was directed at the most popular *son* of all time, *Son De La Loma* by The Trio Matamoros.) It was in Havana that the *sexteto's* instrumentation originated. Oriente may have been the birthplace of the *son*, but Havana its adolescence and maturity.

Sones whose texts reflected public sentiment on socio-political issues were also popular. The Great Depression of 1929 produced numerous outcries such as *Incitadora Región* which represented quite a change in public opinion and a nationalist condemnation of the once-celebrated president turned dictator Gerardo Machado. In *Vengan Vengan* the Sexteto Munamar borrows the

melody from a jazz fox trot, *JA-DA!*, made popular in the twenties, and adapts this North American pop song to *son*. Its text ranges in issues from cultural imperialism to the historic popular resentment toward the "ugly North American tourist" or *gringo*. Opposing the liquor-banning Eighteenth Amendment which established prohibition from January 16, 1920 to December 5, 1933 (until repealed by the Twenty-first Amendment), North Americans would flock to the island seeking to quench their long thirst. Many left behind a tainted image of themselves as condescending and unscrupulous drunkards. Listen to the lead vocalist's impersonation of the *Yanquis'* sneezing and drunken laughter: "...Somos los yanquis, opuesto a la ley seca y hemos venido a tomar La Tropical, La Tropical. Me, me está borr' (estornudo); me está borracho (estornudo) ¡Oiga señora ja,ja,ja...! ¡Oiga señora ja,ja,ja...! Pero me querer tomar La Tropical, La Tropical. Come on baby, ja,ja,ja..." "...We are the yankees, opposed to the Dry Law. And we've come to drink La Tropical (beer), La Tropical. I'm drunk (sneeze); I'm drunk (sneeze) Listen lady ha, ha, ha...! Listen lady ha, ha, ha...! But I want to drink La

Tropical, La Tropical. Come on baby, ha, ha, ha...!"

Finally, since Africa was such a pervasive force in the creolization of Cuban art and culture, *sones* with Afro-Cuban melodic and thematic content and black emotion should be considered a category. Institutionalized racism against black Cubans and an amoralistic anti-*son* campaign by 1929 gave rise to an ever-increasing racial consciousness whose best popularizer, at least on record, was the Sexteto Munamar. *Yíbiri*, *Lucumí* and *Acuérdate Bien Chaleco* are some examples of *sones-lucumí*. In *Acuérdate Bien Chaleco*, three common practices of the *Santería* religion are addressed: *Bembé*, the religious ritual celebration: "...Tú te va' de'graciá' si te pone' a juga' tu bembé..." ("...You're going to disgrace yourself if you don't take your *bembé* seriously...") Also the system of divination, using seashells, and possession, resulting from the invocation of the saints: "...Yo te vi a casa 'e madrina con el santo medio loco... Yo sé que viene madrina y vuela los caracoles..." "...I saw you at godmother's house possessed.....I know that godmother is coming and she'll throw the seashells..." *No Es Cuento*, *No* by the Sexteto Machín,

aside from being a *pulla* or reply to a classic *son* of 1928 by Ignacio Piñeiro, *No Juegues Con Los Santos*, contains the most complex text of any of the early *sones*. It alludes to the favorite colors associated with the more worshipped *orishas* or Yoruba deities: "...Yalórde (Ochún) viste de amarillo/Yemayá viste de azul/Santa Bárbara (Changó) punzó/ De varios colores viste Oyá /Y tú que te tapas con lila/Hijo de Ochosi odé..." "...Yalórde (Title of honor shared by the *orishas* Ochún and Yemayá. Almost always pronounced and spelled "Yalóde", without the "r".) (Ochún) dresses in yellow. Yemayá dresses in blue. Saint Barbara bright red. Oyá adorns herself in various colors. And you who wrap yourself with lavender Child of Ochosi, the hunter..."

By mid-1928 the *guajira-son* added the *décima* to the *son* text. The first *guajira-sones* were recorded by the Sexteto Habanero on May 29, 1928: *Alma Guajira* and *Tribilín Cantore* (heard on Folklyric 9054). Included in this CD are two *guajira-sones*, both by the Sexteto Machín: *Reina Guajira* and *A Orillas Del Yumurí*. The *guajira-sones* lyrics idealize the countryside and tell fantastic tales. In *Reina Guajira*, the following *décima*

describes surreal imagery of animals assuming human personas: "...Yendo tan larga mi vista/Vi una cosa tan extraña/Un gato pelando caña/Un ratón de motorista/Una avispa de oculista/Que le penetra a un ternero/Un conejo cocinero/Y el abejón se reía/Y a Panchito que corría/Componiéndose el sombrero..." "...As far as my eye could see/I saw such an odd thing/A cat cutting (sugar) cane/A mouse riding a motorcycle/A wasp as an eye doctor/Stinging a calf/A rabbit-cook/And a grinning bumblebee/And Panchito who ran/Adjusting his hat..."

By the summer of 1929, the *son-pregon* captured popular attention. Imitating roving urban street vendors as they advertised their goods in falsetto voice, the genre was stylized as a musical adaptation of this tropical custom. The Sexteto Machín recorded three *son-pregones* of which two have been included: *Caserita* and *Avellana Y Maní*. The following text is from *Caserita*: "*Caserita, Caserita/Si es que usted me va comprar/Preste un momento de oído/Que ahora voy a pregonar: Uvas blancas, uvas moradas/Ciruelas de California/Baratas las peras de agua/Caimitos* (Native Caribbean fruit) *y melocotones*

Montuno: Venga pronto caserita que ya se va el vendedor..."

"Housewife, housewife/If you're going to buy from me/Pay attention for one moment/ because now I will announce my goods:

White grapes, red grapes/California plums/ cheap, juicy pears/Star apples and peaches

Montuno: Housewife, come quickly! The fruit vendor is leaving..."

Between 1925-1937, 21 *sextetos de son* were immortalized on over 400 sides of phonographic discs. The peak-year of the *son's* urban development within the record industry was 1930. The *son* had evolved steadily in complexity since 1925 (compare with Folklyric 9053 & 9054). Each group reserved its own distinctive style: the Sexteto Machín with its audacious narratives, partial to *son-pregones* and *guajira-sones*, the Sexteto Matancero: poetic and gallantly romantic, the Sexteto Nacional: patriotic and the Sexteto Munamar: proud of its Afro-Cuban heritage. For nearly two decades, the *son* and the *sextetos* had no rivals. It was their golden era!

Sexteto Munamar

The Sexteto Munamar was founded either in 1928 or 1929 and little has been documented in Cuba about them. The energetic vocals of Antonio Piñera and Eulalio Kessel and their mastery of their instruments made this group among the finest of all the recorded *sextetos*. An outstanding feature of the Sexteto Munamar was their cornetist Félix Chappottín Lage, the colossal trumpeter of the *son*, who recorded for the first time with the Sexteto Habanero in November and December 1928. He joined the Sexteto Munamar in 1929. He was only 23 years old when the recordings included in this CD were made. So indelible a mark did the senior Sexteto Habanero have on this young group and on this legendary "Cuban Louis Armstrong," that he would close each *son* with a classic Sexteto Habanero trademark—their eight note closure. (Note: #4 & 5 on this CD and *Se Fue* on Arhoolie/Folklyric 9054) The Sexteto Munamar recorded 12 *sones* - 11 were released on 78s.

4. Crucé Los Mares

Crucé los mares y otras tierras (2X)
Por doquiera que fui la desplegué
Tan esplendente, tan soberana
Que linda es mi bandera cubana (2X)

Montuno:

Coro: ¿Cuánto me das por la bomba, cochero? (3X)

Solo: Cochero, la bomba, cochero

Solo: La bomba, la bomba, la bomba, cochero

Solo: La bomba, corre, que corre, cochero

Solo: ¡Wo! ¡Wo! cochero

Solo: Cochero, préstame dinero

Coro: ¿Cuánto me das por la bomba, cochero? (3X)

I Crossed The Seas

I crossed the seas and other lands (2X)
Wherever I roamed, I unfurled it
So radiant, so exalted
How beautiful is my Cuban flag (2X)

Montuno:

Chorus: Coachman, how much will you give me for the top hat? (3X)

Solo: Coachman, the top hat, coachman

Solo: The top hat, the top hat, the top hat, coachman

Solo: The top hat, Giddy-up! Giddy-up coachman!

Solo: Whoa! Whoa! coachman

Solo: Coachman, lend me some money

Chorus: Coachman, how much will you give me for the top hat? (3X)

5. Chaquetón

Los carteles mirar señores y apreciar los
sones (2X)

Cantamos risueños y compramos
dulzuras

Y conquistamos a la unión de los amores (2X)

Montuno:

Solo: Chaquetón, chaquetón

Coro: Dame mi chaquetón (2X)

Solo: Quiero habitar tu bohío

Coro: 'Io

Solo: Hecho con pencas de guano

Coro: 'Ano

Solo: Fumar tu tabaco Habano

Coro: 'Ano

Solo: Con libertad y albedrío

Coro: 'Io

Solo: Cha-que-tón

Coro: Dame mi chaquetón...

Overcoat

Gentlemen, look at the posters and appreciate the "sones" (2X)

We sing merrily and tell words of
endearment

And we draw an audience amongst this
gathering of lovers (2X)

Montuno:

Solo: Overcoat, overcoat

Chorus: Give me my overcoat (2X)

Solo: I want to dwell in your hut

Chorus: 'Io

Solo: Made with planks of dried palm
leaves

Chorus: 'Ano

Solo: Smoke your Havana cigar

Chorus: 'Ano

Solo: Without constrictions and of my
own free will

Chorus: 'Io

Solo: Over-coat

Chorus: Give me my overcoat...

Sexteto Machín

The Sexteto Machín was founded by Antonio Lugo Machín to record his first *sones* on September 12, 1929. In the spring of 1930, he travelled to New York City, and left most of the original members of his all-star *sexteto* in Cuba. He made plans to permanently reside in NYC and create a new style of *son* orchestration that would eliminate the *bongó*, and string bass - a *cuarteto de son*. Machín directed a Havana-based *sexteto* with which he played *claves* and another in NYC which featured him on *maracas*. His long-time companion, Daniel Sánchez, was the only consistent member of both *sextetos* and of his 1930s quartet. The last Havana session (6/18/30)

substituted a different guitarist, possibly Manuel Luna Salgado or Miguel Zaballa. Having left his arranger, (Alejandro Rodríguez, the *tres* player), behind in Cuba, he sought other Latino musicians residing in NYC, especially among the Puerto Rican community. The first voice in the chorus sounds like Pedro "Piquito" Marciano (*claves*) of the Cuarteto/Sexteto Flores (heard only on #11). Many other known Puerto Rican first and second voices sang with his quartet, including: Pedro Dávila (Davilita), Pedro Berríos and Doroteo Santiago. Not finding an adequate *tres* player to replace "Mulato," he used Yayito Maldonado - a fine guitar and *cuatro* player, also Puerto Rican, who would become Machín's first (lead) guitar player. The four *sones* recorded in NYC on June 3, 1930 (three are included in this compact disc) were the first and only recordings by a Cuban *sexteto* utilizing the *cuatro* and not the *tres*. From 1930 to 1935, Machín recorded almost exclusively with his *cuarteto* for RCA Victor. In 1936 he moved to Spain where he died in 1977. He recorded a lifetime total of 42 *sones* as a *sexteto/septeto* in 1929-1930 and 1935. Only one was not released.

9. Me Voy A Baracoa

Este son tradicional es el que me gusta
más (2X)

Porque no pierdo el compas de mi modo
de bailar (2X)

A Baracoa me voy aunque no haya
carretera

Aunque no haya carretera a Baracoa me
voy (2X)

Antenoché me dijiste que ya tu no me
querías (2X)

Hasta la perra de casa me miraba y se
reía (2X)

Yo me he forjado una idea la que nadie

I'm Going to Baracoa

I like this traditional *son* most of all (2X)
Because I don't miss the beat of my style
of dancing (2X)

I'm going to Baracoa even if there's no
road
Even if there's no road I'm going to
Baracoa (2X)

The night before last, you told me that
you no longer loved me (2X)
Even the house dog would look at me
and laugh (2X)

I've thought of an idea no one else has (2X)

se ha pensado (2X)
El que nace desdichado hasta los perros
lo miran (2X)

10. Reina Guajira

¡Oye entonar mi guajira, sus dulces
trinos y lindos cantares! (2X)
Forma su ritmo con sus claves y al
escucharla me inspira

¡Quierme linda guajira yo muero! (2X)

Con la guitarra y el güiro
Mucha dulzura y deseo
Alegre canta el guajiro su típico zapateo

Yendo tan larga mi vista
Vi una cosa tan extraña
Un gato pelando caña
Un ratón de motorista
Un avispa de oculista
Que le penetra a un ternero
Un conejo cocinero
Y el abejón se reía
Y a Panchito que corría
Componiéndose el sombrero

La campesina tarea cesa con el sol
poniente
Y la luna solamente guarda la paz de la
aldea

If you're born wretched, even dogs stare
at you (2X)

Guajira Queen

Listen to the intonation of my *guajira*, its
sweet yodeling and pretty songs! (2X)
Its rhythm is marked with its claves and
while listening I'm inspired

Love me beautiful *guajira* or I'll die! (2X)

With the guitar and *guiro*
Much sweetness and feeling
The *guajiro* merrily sings his typical
*zapateo**

As far as my eye could see
I saw such an odd thing
A cat cutting (sugar) cane
A mouse riding a motorcycle
A wasp as an eye doctor
Stinging a calf
A rabbit-cook
And a grinning bumblebee
And Panchito who ran
Adjusting his hat

A farmer's job is done at sunset
And the moon solely watches over the
tranquility of the village

*A heel tap dance from the Cuban countryside.

11. El Camisón De Pepa

Pepa tiene un camisón que baila sólo una
danza

Le hace chiquita la panza cuando aprieta
el cinturón

Ya no tiene ni un botón para arreglar la
varilla

Y está roto en la rodilla y en otro sitio peor

El camisón de Pepa tiene historia

En La Habana ganó el premio mayor por
su singularidad

No es de seda; ni es de tela; no es de tejido
imperial

Y en la calle le hace un talle que le dicen al
pasar:

Montuno:

Coro: ¡Qué bonita se ve Pepa con su
camisón! (2X)

Solo: Un chusco quería robarse el
camisón de Pepita

Solo: Y le siguieron la pista antes que
fuera a embarcarse

Solo: El corrió para escaparse por toda la
población

Solo: Al llegar al malecón lo cogió la policía

Solo: El caso es que en la porfía, Pepa
perdió el camisón

Coro: ¡Qué bonita se ve Pepa con su
camisón!

Pepa's Shirdress

Pepa has a shirdress that can dance by
itself

It makes her belly very small when she
tightens the belt

She no longer has even a button to fix her
corset ribbing

And it's torn at the knee and even worse
still in another spot

Pepa's shirdress has a long history
In Havana, it won first prize for its
uniqueness

It's not made of silk, nor cloth fabric, nor of
an imperial weave

She gives it such shape that on the streets
as she passes people say:

Montuno:

Chorus: See how pretty Pepa looks in her
shirdress! (2X)

Solo: A scoundrel wanted to steal Pepita's
shirdress

Solo: And they pursued his trail before he
would get away

Solo: In an attempt to escape, he fled
through the crowd

Solo: As he arrived at the sea wall, the
police seized him

Solo: In any case, after the chase ended,
Pepa had lost her shirdress.

Chorus: See how pretty Pepa looks in her
shirdress!

12. Fuego En La Maya

Ocultas tu gran dolor, soportas tu padecer
Después que sufras miles de amarguras,
cuéntale al mundo lo que es sufrir
Tú dices que te dijeron, siempre a ti te
están diciendo
Ya yo sé, voy conociendo vives celoso

Montuno:

Solo: Templé una china en una playa; le di
candela pero no ardió

Coro: ¡Ay sí! ¡Ay no! ¡Ay sí! ¡Ay no!
¡Monte agudo, fuego en La Maya sí!
¡Fuego en La Maya no!
¡Fuego en La Maya sí! ¡Fuego en La
Maya no!

Solo: Tengo una negra de casta fina con
pluma larga y con malakof

Solo: En una choza de Vueltabajo, tengo
una parda que es pura miel

Solo: En una noche que yo cantaba tembló
la arena, alaba' o sea Dios

Coro: ¡Ay sí! ¡Ay no! ¡Ay sí! ¡Ay no!

13. Mamá Yo Quiero Un Yoyo

El yoyo se ha impuesto ya y un gran
revuelo ha causado
Pues lo juegan los muchachos y hasta los
hombres casados
En La Habana es notorio el baile del yoyo
Predilecto entre el novio es el que quiero yo

Fire in La Maya

Conceal your immense grief; bear with
your anguish
After you've endured a thousand afflic-
tions, tell the world what it's like to suffer
You say that they've told you; someone is
always telling you something
Now I know; I'm beginning to realize that
you live jealously

Montuno:

Solo: I had intercourse with a colored
woman on a beach; I tried to arouse
her, but she didn't respond

Chorus: Woe is me! Woe is me! In the
boondocks, fire in La Maya! Alas, fire
in La Maya!

Solo: I have an upper-class Negro
woman with a long feather (in her
bonnet) and with a petticoat

Solo: In a hut in Vueltabajo, I have a
mulatto woman that is sheer honey

Solo: One evening while I was singing,
the earth shook. Praise be to God!

Chorus: Woe is me! Woe is me!

Mamma, I Want A Yoyo

The yoyo has now imposed itself and caused
a great commotion
Young boys and even married men enjoy
playing with it
In Havana, the dance of the yoyo is notorious
The one preferred amongst lovers is the one

Ya hoy grande y chiquito todos saben
jugar
Es el yoyo señores una gran novedad

Un tremendo escándalo ayer tarde se
formó
Porque a la niña de en frente le rompieron
el yoyo
Y la niña lloraba: "¡Ay mamá mi yoyo!"
Se lo di que jugara, pero me lo rompió
Y la madre le dijo, presa de gran furor:
"¡Ya te dije chiquilla deja quieto el yoyo!"

Montuno:

Si te quieres divertir como me divierto yo
No tienes más que decir: "Mamá yo quiero
un yoyo." (3X)

15. A Orillas Del Yumurí

¡Ven guajira a refrescar a orillas del
Yumurí! (2X)

Alegra brilla la aurora al trinar de los
sinsontes (2X)
Y ya su lumbre colora los lejanos
horizontes (2X)

Ya la plaga se ha extendido en casi todo el
tabaco
El potro se ha puesto flaco; el macho se ha

I want
Nowadays, big and small, all know how to
play
Gentlemen, the yoyo is a grand novelty

Yesterday afternoon, a dreadful scandal
developed
Because the girl from across the street got
her yoyo broken
And the girl wept: "Oh mamma, my yoyo!"
I lent it to him to play with, but he broke it
And the mother exclaimed, enraged with
fury
"I've already told you child leave your yoyo
alone!"

Montuno: If you want to amuse yourself as
I do
All you have to say is: "Mamma, I want a
yoyo." (3X)

On the Banks of the Yumuri

Guajira, come refreshen yourself on the
banks of the Yumuri! (2X)
Daybreak shines brightly to the caroling
of the mockingbirds (2X)
Already the light of dawn colors the dis-
tant horizons (2X)

The plague has now extended throughout
nearly all the tobacco crop
The colt has gotten thin; the mule has saddened

enrystecido
El malangar se ha perdido; en el nido no
hay un huevo
Y por la cosecha dan la mitad de lo que
debo (2X)

17. Sorteo De La Caridad

Ahora vamos a empezar a cantar la lotería
Y obras públicas serán para Oriente la
alegría (2X)

Estación de onda larga XIZ
En combinación con la de onda corta PPW
Sorteo de la caridad celebrado en San-
tiago de Cuba en el Parque Céspedes

Declamador: 7,478
Apuntador: Con 100 pesos
Declamador: 5,492
Apuntador: Con 100 pesos
Declamador: 20,491
Apuntador: Con 100 pesos (etc.)
2do apuntador: Vendido en una bachatota
en Guantánamo
2do apuntador: Vendido en Baracoa
2do apuntador: Vendido en Palma
(Soriano)
2do apuntador: Vendido en Banes

La última bola señores: 15,991, con 100
pesos

The malanga field has spoiled; in the nest
there's not even one egg
And for the harvest, I was paid only half of
what I owe (2X)

Lottery Drawing

We will now begin to sing the lottery
And such public works will bring Oriente
much happiness (2X)

Long wave station XIZ in conjunction with
short wave station PPW
Public lottery drawn in Céspedes Park in
Santiago de Cuba

Number-caller: 7,478
Recorder: With 100 pesos
Number-caller: 5,492
Recorder: With 100 pesos
Number-caller: 20,491
Recorder: With 100 pesos (etc.)
2nd recorder: Sold at a party in
Guantánamo
2nd recorder: Sold in Baracoa
2nd recorder: Sold in Palma (Soriano)
2nd recorder: Sold in Banes

Gentlemen, the last number ball: 15,991
with 100 pesos

Coro: ¡Cua, cua, cua, la lotería se terminó! (2X) Chorus: Ha! Ha! Ha! The lottery has come
to an end! (2X)

Sexteto Nacional

The Sexteto Nacional is the only *sexteto* that has survived into the 1990s. Ignacio Piñeiro Martínez (string bass) and three troubadours: Juan Ignacio de la Cruz Hermida (*claves*), Bienvenido León Chacón (*maracas*) and Alberto Villalón Morales (*guitarra*) who had recorded since 1924 as a trio, founded this *sexteto* at the request of a Columbia Records' scout in order to compete with the success that RCA Victor had with their exclusive artists, the Sexteto Habanero. Both groups would be pitted against each other in a rivalry never before or since witnessed in any genre of Cuban music. Both *sextetos* had scheduled three dueling recording sessions in 1927 and 1928. Both featured the same lead singer: Abelardo Barroso (*claves*), "El Gran Caruso" and even one-fifth of their repertoire overlapped.

In the spring of 1929, the Sexteto Nacional was chosen to represent the Cuban *son* at the Cuban pavilion of the "Exposición Ibero-Americana" held in Sevilla, Spain. The period from 1930-1934, represents the most popular era for the Sexteto Nacional and in 1933, they travelled to Chicago to record and perform at the World's Fair "One Hundred Years Of Progress".

Since 1935 the Septeto Nacional has undergone innumerable personnel changes and resurfaced to record in 1937 and 1940. Today the only surviving founding member is Lázaro Herrera Díaz, who recently retired. The Septeto Nacional recorded a lifetime total of 96 *sones* for the Columbia, RCA Victor, Gramófono, and Brunswick labels from 1927-1940. Notwithstanding compatible careers, they never quite succeeded in overshadowing the Sexteto Habanero's 136 recordings for RCA Victor from 1918-1948.

20. Incitadora Región

¿Qué virtud tendrá incitadora región?
Para conquistar y divertir
Bajo la algazara de reír crece el amor a
gran valor

Inciting Region

What virtue can this delightful region have?
To conquer and entertain
Amid the clamor of laughter, love grows
virtuously

Será este reinado y ser la mengua fatal
No te juntes en tu mansión
Ebrios están tus moradores de lucir y
gozar

Por eso Habana grandiosa
A despecho del tirano
El son humano te canta así
Para gozar de crecido amor y embraigar
de placeres
Lindas flores y mujeres
La Habana, La Habana

Montuno:

Coro: Son tus mujeres mi dulce Habana
como las flores de la mañana...
Solo: Son tus mujeres mi dulce Habana y
todas viven a la campana
Coro: Son tus mujeres mi dulce Habana
como las flores de la mañana...

Sexteto Matancero

The Sexteto Matancero was originally founded in Matanzas, Cuba but relocated to Havana with its founder, Isaac Oviedo, in 1926. They made their first recordings in 1928 and 1930 for RCA. Their only other recordings were made for Brunswick and all four are included in this compact disc—a lifetime total of seven.

Isaac Oviedo was the most musically articulate *tresero* of the 1920s and 1930s. He transformed the *tres* into a soloist's instrument years before Arsenio Rodríguez did it in the late 1930s. Listen to his solo in *Son A La Mujer Cubana*. Melodically and harmonically speaking, the Sexteto Matancero is the best *sexteto* of the era. Today, Isaac Oviedo still performs with his daughter Julia, his sons Ernesto and "Papi" and other members of his family La Familia Oviedo.

Perhaps it's this reign and cursed wretchedness
Don't seclude yourself in your mansion
Pageantry and splendor have inebriated your
citizenry

This is why splendid Havana
In spite of the tyrant
We eulogize you with this *son*
To enjoy flourishing love and intoxicate
yourself with pleasures
Lovely flowers and women
Havana, Havana

Montuno:

Chorus: My sweet Havana, your women are
like the blossoming flowers at daybreak...
Solo: My sweet Havana, your women live
fashionably
Chorus: My sweet Havana, your women are
like the blossoming flowers at daybreak...

21. Son A La Mujer Cubana

De todo digno cubano de la cubana
mujer
De espíritu noble y sano y de genial
proceder
Música, luz y alegría, contento y
satisfacción
Cantan en el alma mía Cuba, su mujer y
el son

¡Oye! ¡Miren mi gozo!

La cadencia de mi canto y su dulce
inspiración

Montuno:

Solo: Con las cosas de mi tierra
Coro: ¡Tropical!
Solo: Y en las costumbres que encierra
Coro: ¡El ideal!
Coro: ¡Tropical! ...¡El ideal! ...(2X)

22. A Una Matancera

Eres linda matancera cual inquieto colibrí
Que vuela por la ribera a orillas del Yumurí
Por tu mirada sentí una ferviente pasión
Grabando en mi corazón grato recuerdo de ti

Montuno:

Matancera, matancera, por ti la vida yo
diera (4X)

Son to Cuban Women

From all the Cuban men worthy of a
Cuban woman
Of noble and sound spirit and of
pleasant demeanor
Music, sunlight and gaiety, contentment
and satisfaction
Cuba, its women and the *son* sing in my
soul

Listen! Look at my joy!

The cadence of my song and its sweet
inspiration

Montuno:

Solo: With the things of my country
Chorus: Tropical!
Solo: And the customs it harbors
Chorus: The ideal!
Chorus: Tropical! ...The ideal! ...(2X)

To A Matanzas Woman

Beautiful Matanzas woman, you are such
a fidgety hummingbird
That flies along the brook near the banks
of the Yumuri river
For your gaze I felt an ardent passion
Engraving in my heart a pleasant
remembrance of you

Montuno: Matanzas woman, Matanzas
woman, I would give my life for you (4X)

23. La Vida No Retoña

Yo me quiero divertir, que la vida no retoña (2X)

Y yo busco una mujer que me sepa comprender y que no me haga sufrir (2X)

Yo no pierdo mi tiempo; lo dedico al placer. ¿Por qué?

Porque tiempo perdido malito jamás puede volver (2X)

Montuno: Goza la vida y verás que estás en lo cierto camará' (3X)

24. ¿De Dónde Serán?

Anoche me desperté gratamente sorprendido

Al escuchar el sonido de la guitarra y el tres

¡Qué voces más armoniosas! ¡Qué deliciosos instantes!

¿De dónde serán las cosas que cantaron los cantantes?

¿Serán de Oriente? La tierra del son

¿Serán de Matanzas? Cuna del danzón

¡No señor! ¡No señor!

¡Son de La Habana señores! ¡Qué sentencia le porfía!

Life Cannot Be Relived

I want to enjoy myself because life cannot be relived (2X)

And I'm searching for a woman who will understand me and who will not make me suffer (2X)

I don't waste my time; I devote it to pleasure. Why?

Because time badly spent can never return (2X)

Montuno: Enjoy life and you will see my friend that you're doing the right thing (3X)

Where Are They From?

Last night, I awoke pleasantly surprised Upon hearing the sounds of the guitar and the tres

Such harmonious voices! What a delightful moment!

From where do the singers acquire their inspirations?

Are they from Oriente? The birthplace of the son

Are they from Matanzas? The cradle of the danzón

No sir! No sir!

Gentlemen, they are from Havana! What a stubborn verdict!

Tienen lindas armonías y también dulces cantores (2X)

Montuno:

Solo: ¿De dónde serán los trovadores?

Coro: ¡Son de La Habana y de las flores!

Solo: Quisiera conocer a los cantadores

Coro: ¡Son de La Habana y de las flores! (3X)

They possess beautiful harmonies as well as sweet singers (2X)

Montuno:

Solo: Where are the troubadours from?

Chorus: They're from Havana and of the flowers!

Solo: I would like to meet the singers

Chorus: They're from Havana and of the flowers! (3X)

Produced by Chris Strachwitz and Michael Iván Avalos. Notes and song transcriptions by Michael Iván Avalos. Song translations by Michael I. Avalos and Jacqueline Namys-Avalos. Discography by Michael I. Avalos. Thanks to Ronnie Pugh and Bob Pinson at The Country Music Foundation in Nashville, Tennessee and Richard K. Spottswood for discographical help. pecial thanks and posthumous respects to the memory of Eutimio Constantín Guillarte, who passed away in The Bronx (New York) on his 84th birthday (1/20/90). He was the guitarist and third voice for the Septeto Nacional from 1929-1940 and granted interviews in the summer of 1989 to Michael Iván Avalos. A warm thanks from Michael to Armando Sánchez Robira for opening some doors and thanks to Mario Bauzá Cárdenas, Marcelino Guerra Abreu, Vicentico Valdés Valdés and Graciella Pérez Gutiérrez for their recollections. Original discs from the collection of Chris A. Strachwitz. Sound restoration by George Morrow of Echo Productions using the NoNoise system. Cover by Wayne Pope.

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Septeto Nacional (1937), left to right: Marcelino Guerra Abreu-maracas; Francisco González Solares-trés; Eutimio Constantín Guillarte-guitarra; Ramón Castro-bongó; Lázaro Herrera Díaz-trompeta; Bienvenido Granda-claves; Oscar Vilarta-contrabajo. Photo courtesy of Michael Iván Avalos.

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3. ENTRE TODAS LAS MUJERES
(Amongst All Women)
4. CRUCE LOS MARES (I Crossed The Seas)
5. CHAQUETON (Overcoat)
6. LUCUMÍ (Lucumí)
7. YIBIRI (Yibiri)

SEXTETO MACHIN: (1929 & 1930)

8. NO ES CUENTO, NO (It's Not A Story, Really!)
9. ME VOY A BARACOA (I'm Going To Baracoa)
10. REINA GUAJIRA (Guajira Queen)
11. EL CAMISON DE PEPA (Pepa's Shirdress)
12. FUEGO EN LA MAYA (Fire In La Maya)
13. MAMA YO QUIERO UN YOYO
(Mamma, I Want A Yoyo)
14. AVELLANA Y MANI
(Hazelnuts And Peanuts)
15. A ORILLAS DEL YUMURI
(On The Banks Of The Yumuri)
16. EL REY MANOLO (King Manolo)
17. SORTEO DE LA CARIDAD (Lottery Drawing)
18. CASERITA (Housewife)

SEXTETO NACIONAL: (1930)

19. SUAVECITO (Gently)
20. INCITADORA REGION (Inciting Region)

SEXTETO MATANCERO: (1930)

21. SON A LA MUJER CUBANA
(Son To Cuban Women)
22. A UNA MATANCERA
(To A Matanzas Woman)
23. LA VIDA NO RETOÑA
(Life Cannot Be Relived)
24. ¿DE DONDE SERAN?
(Where Are They From?)

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Cover photo: *Septeto Nacional (1938)*



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