

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4064

Recorded by Verna Gillis in Cuba 1978-79

# MUSIC OF CUBA MUSIC OF CUBA MUSIC OF CUBA

Introduction, notes on the recordings and musical transcriptions by John Santos





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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE IN POCKET

Cover photo by Brad Graves. Cover art work: *Ireme* figure made by Juan "El Negro" Raymat in New York City in 1982. Ireme is the most picturesque personality of the Cuban Abakúa religion. His characteristic costume and choreography are unique in Afro-cuban folklore.

This album is dedicated to the brilliant Cuban percussionist Daniel Ponce, who has had an enormous cultural impact on American music since his arrival in 1980. Tremendo persona, músico, talento y amigo...

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge and thank all of the musicians of Cuba, past and present, especially those who so generously shared their music. Special thanks to: Antonio Pérez, for helping with recording arrangements in Santiago; Jane Wood for her assistance and enthusiasm; the Center for Cuban Studies in New York City who sponsored the trip during which these recordings were made; Rene Lopez for his invaluable and inspirational work in the areas of Cuban and Puerto Rican music; Andrew Schloss for editing and computer typesetting; Dorothea Wilkinson for typing the manuscript; and Leland Smith for computer typesetting of musical examples.

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The importance of this collection of Afro-Cuban folkloric music can be seen by observing two facts:

1. That all the forms presented here have played integral roles in the formation of traditional and popular Cuban music.

2. That traditional and popular Cuban music have been a tremendous influence on the music of the Americas and other parts of the world.

In realizing these two facts, it becomes apparent that these recordings are some of the seminal forms to many of today's popular musical styles. Another interesting fact is that although these forms are in some cases hundreds of years old, the recordings are recent (1978-1979), giving some indication of the continuity of traditional music in Cuba and its impact on popular forms. This music is constantly evolving and adapting to its environment while maintaining its function as a vehicle of social comment and expression for the Cuban people in particular, and for many people outside of Cuba as well.

The particular combination of musical forms presented here reflects Cuba's cultural heritage very accurately. Some forms, such as the *Bolero*, were brought to Cuba by the Spanish colonists. *Palo*, *Bakoso* and *Bembé* are almost purely African in origin. There are also forms such as the *Yambú*, *Conga*, *Guaracha* and the *Son*, which were created through the process of cultural syncretization which has been ongoing since the first African slaves arrived in Cuba at the beginning of the 16th century. The *Danza* was derived from the *Contradanza* which was brought to Cuba by the French towards the end of the 18th century.

A brief look into Cuba's unique history will provide us with some insight into these recordings. Cuba's particular cultural heritage is largely the result of two horrendous examples of inhumanity—the annihilation of the indigenous peoples of the island, and the institution of the abominable slave trade which endured for almost 400 years. Spanish colonization began at the end of the 15th century. The Indians of Cuba were exploited, enslaved, murdered and practically extinct within 35 years after colonization began. This explains why there is virtually no Indian influence in Cuba's traditional or popular music, unlike the countries of Central and South America, where the Indian heritage has played a major role in cultural development.

The extinction of the Indians marked the beginning of the African slave trade. Over the course of the next four centuries, huge numbers of slaves were brought to Cuba from west and central Africa. The largest numbers of slaves were from the linguistic groups known as *Bantú* (from central Africa) and *Yoruba* (from Nigeria).

Being the largest island of the Caribbean, Cuba became the largest importer of African slaves in the area. The deep religious commitment of the different African groups was the one thing which could not be stripped of them. Music, singing and dancing are vital parts of African religion and daily activity. An astounding number of rhythms, instruments, dances, dialects and forms merged and evolved on the island of Cuba. The white peasant farmers of Spanish descent known as *Campeños* or *guajiros* also had their own poetry and music. The elite class of land owners



Shekere (Gourd Rattle)

Photo by Verna Gillis

and slave owners had their classical music of Western Europe. All of these elements overlapped through the years and with the ending of slavery in the 1880s, the process of syncretization accelerated even more.

Cuban music has travelled around the world. Its most obvious influence has been on what is presently the world's most popular form of Latin music, *Salsa* which is concentrated in New York, Puerto Rico and Venezuela, yet very popular in Europe, Africa, Japan and in the rest of the Americas. *Salsa* draws on the contribution of Cuban music much more than on any other single element. It cannot be disputed that Cuba has always been the world's Latin Music capital.

The abrupt and informal ambience of these recordings is due to the fact that they are mostly field recordings as opposed to having been produced in a recording studio. The participants are in almost all cases not professional musicians, but are naturally creating and responding to the music which is a genuine ele-

ment of most traditional folk music. It should also be noted that the transcriptions of the texts may not be exact. Some of these texts are hundreds of years old and have been passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. They are very often interpreted quite differently by individuals according to who taught them. The lyrics also incorporate a great deal of colloquial Spanish and African dialects for which there exist no formal written counterparts. Therefore, the transcriptions are done largely through phonetic interpretation.

Due to the present lack of relations between the governments of Cuba and the United States, information on Cuban culture is virtually impossible to obtain in our educational systems or in our communities. This is especially unfortunate, not only to students of Latin music, but also in terms of preventing the people of both countries from learning more about one another.



## SIDE ONE

Band 1: **Yambú (Rumba)**. Recorded in Santiago de Cuba.

Rumba is one of the most basic forms of profane Cuban musical expression. It developed mostly around the poor black communal living quarters (*solares*) in the urban areas of Havana and in the slave barracks (*baracones*) of rural Matanzas. These overcrowded living conditions gave birth to the Rumba as a means of diversion.

The Rumba consists of dance, rhythm and song, all three of these components being of equal importance. However, if we had to describe the Rumba with only one word we would have to say "party" because it is a collective celebration in which everyone participates, regardless of age, race, social class or musical ability. The strongest influence in the Rumba is obviously African, although its Spanish heritage is also evident. The African influence is mostly Congolese.

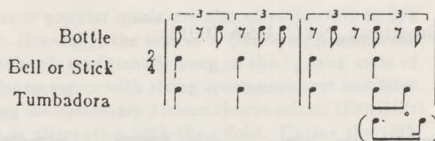
Rumba must be considered a general topic under which exist several sub-categories. The most important of the sub-categories are the *Yambú*, *Güagüancó* and *Columbia*. In its early stages, the Rumba had no formal instruments. A chair, cupboard, table, drawer, spoons, sticks, a crate, or whatever was available served as instruments. Eventually, the *Tumbadoras* (drums of Congolese origin commonly known as *Congas*) became an integral part of the Rumba complex. Although the lyrics of Rumbas are usually in Spanish, the call and response interaction between the vocal soloist and the chorus is clearly of African origin. The choreography of the Rumba is highly pantomimed and improvisational and is characterized by the movement known as *Vacunao*, which is a pelvic movement of erotic symbolism. This movement is directly derived from the fertility dance of Congolese origin known as *Yuka*. The *Yambú* is the only style of Rumba which does not incorporate the *Vacunao*.

The most important musical instrument in the Rumba is a simple pair of hardwood sticks called *Claves*. They are struck against each other producing a clear and penetrating sound and a syncopated rhythm upon which the entire Rumba is based. Whether or not the actual *Claves* are being played, the "Clave feeling" is always present and might be clapped with the hands, played on a bell, or played on the side of a drum with a stick.

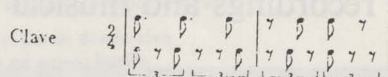
The *Yambú* is identified by its restrained tempo, the use of the *Cajón* (wooden box) and by the use of the *Regina*, which is a simple form of traditional Spanish poetry consisting of four-line stanzas. Usually two *Cajones* are used; a large one which maintains a steady rhythm, and a small one (*Quinto*) upon which syncopated improvisations are played. In this example, however, the steady rhythm is played on a *Tumbadora* (Conga drum). Also, a bottle struck with a coin is substituted for the *Claves* and a bell or stick plays straight quarter-notes.

The text opens with an extended *Diana* (vocal introduction common in all Rumbas) sung in alternation by the soloist and chorus in which "vocables" or syllables having no meaning are used. Then begins the *Coro*, or chorus refrain, which is sung in alternation with improvisations by the soloist. The excitement and tension builds as a result of the incessant polyrhythmic repetition and the interplay of the drums and dancers until dropping in volume and intensity to accommodate the introduction of another song by the *Gallo* (vocal soloist). At a Rumba or *Rumbón* (a celebration where the participants sing, dance and play Rumba) this entire process may continue indefinitely.

Rhythmically, this track is a good example of the simultaneous use of double and triple meter which is very common in African music:



By adding two notes to the common five-note Clave patterns, a strong triple meter is established. The Clave rhythm is usually played in one of these two ways:



Add to this the rhythmic phrasing of the call-and-response vocals, the complex rhythms of the choreography of the dancers, and the improvisations of the *Quinto*, and we have the unique polyrhythmic form known as the Afro-Cuban Rumba.

The translation into English is difficult, but the general meaning can be understood.

Nosotros cultivamos el canto

Oigan bien para divertirlo

Y para tener

Un lindo rato de placer con los amigos

Porque así nos dio la idea

Para que el público vea

Y preste un rato de atención

Pero al oír pero cantando

We cultivate song

Listen so that you can enjoy it

And so that you might have

A beautiful moment of enjoyment with friends

Because it gave us the idea

For the people to see

And lend a little attention

But to hear while singing

Band 2: **Palo**. Recorded in Guanabacoa.

Palo Monte is a cult of Congolese religious affiliation which is characterized by the belief and use of powers contained by elements of nature, such as rocks, trees, and water. Other similar groups of Congolese origin but with ritualistic differences are Palo Briyumba, Palo Mayombe, and Palo Kimbisa. The people who belong to these groups are generally referred to in Cuba as *Congos*, or *Paleros*. All of these forms developed and were passed on in a clandestine manner by word of mouth from generation to generation under the ruthless hand of slavery.

The antiphonal structure of the vocals between the *Gallo* (lead singer) and the *Vasallo* (chorus) is an African tradition which has become an important part of popular as well as traditional Cuban music. This is especially true since the ending of slavery in Cuba (1880's) and can still be seen today in popular Cuban and Cuban-based music.

The instruments used in this piece are: two hand-drums known collectively as *Ngóna*, and a shaker-type instrument known as *Nkémbi*. A metal bell-like instrument called *Ngongüí* and a pair of sticks struck against a hollowed log called *Gúdguá* are fairly common in this music, although they are not used here. Usually, three *Ngóna* are used. Their proper names from smallest to largest are: *Cachímbo*, *Mula* and *Caja*. The *Ngóna* are traditionally carved out of a single log and skinned on one end. These are the precursors of the modern-day Conga drums which were refined in Cuba.

The piece opens with a prayer typical of those

sung while secret rituals are performed. According to the greatest ethnomusicological authority on Afro-Cuban music, Fernando Ortiz, this song is derived from the Mayombe tradition:

Oya ya lumba lumba

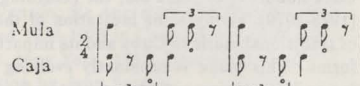
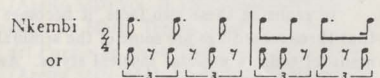
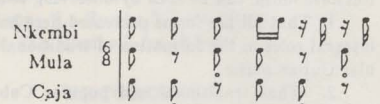
Oya ya kuenda nganga

Muana nfinda lo tomo wasere

Oro tako wa si menso

Oya ya oya ya oya yando adio mi nganga adio

The next part flows in with the Mayombe-derived rhythm known as *Palo*. It is a religious rite which has its own music, choreography and songs or chants. The rhythm is steady and powerful with minimal rhythmic variation. It can be expressed or felt in 6/8 or 2/4 time:



Band 3: **Palo**

The battery of drums (*Ngóna*) is complete here (three drums) and a bell (*Ngongüí*) and a pair of *Claves* are also used. A *Shékere* (African-derived instrument made of a dried calabash gourd with a mesh of beads strung on the outside) is used here in place of the *Nkembí* and is played with a wide variety of rhythmic variations.

Band 4: **Ogún (Santería)**

The descendants of the Yoruba people are known as *Lucumí* in Cuba. The greatest evidence of their impact in the history of Cuba is the existence of the religion known as *Santería*. It is based in Yoruba religion/mythology with certain adaptations of Catholicism. *Santería* emerged when the Spanish attempted to convert the Africans to Christianity. Today the religion thrives throughout the Americas, undergoing many different adaptations and interpretations, but maintaining its base in the Yoruba religion. *Ogún* is the *Orisha* (Yoruba deity) of metal and war. He is identified with the Christian Saint called San Pedro and is widely venerated in Cuba as well as in Africa.

The rhythm used here is played on two Conga-like drums. It is an adaptation of a *Batá* rhythm that is dedicated to *Ogún*. In *Lucumí* ceremonies, Conga-like drums and other instruments have often been used over the years as substitutions for the sacred Nigerian double-headed drums collectively known as *Batá*. *Güiro*, *Bakosó* and *Bembé* are the most important forms used in the absence of the *Batá*. In the form known as *Bakosó*, as in this piece, two drums are used although the rhythm is usually played differently.

In the *Lucumí* language, the soloist is known as *Akpwón* and the chorus is called *Ankorí*. This is a song of praise and supplication to *Ogún*:

Ogunde arere ire bobo lokua

Ogún wanile Ogún walona

Ire bobo lokua e

Saraycoco Ogunde

Band 5: **Shangó (Santería)**. *Bembé* recorded in Santiago de Cuba.



Bembé is the name of a Lucumí religious ritual and celebration in honor of one or more Orisha. Drumming, dancing and singing are the predominant elements at a Bembé. By means of the music and dancing, members of the religion (Santería) call upon their gods to give blessings and advice by manifestation through spiritual possession of the initiates. This series of songs is dedicated to the Orisha Shangó who is the Yoruba god of thunder, passion and virility. He is identified with Santa Barbara of the Catholic Church.

The instruments used here are three barrel-shaped drums with a skin on one end and a *Guataca*, a bell-like instrument, which is the time-keeper. The two smaller drums hold a steady rhythm and are played with the hands while the large drum (Caja) performs the "conversation" with rhythmically syncopated passages and improvisations and is played with one stick and one hand.

The chorus (Ankorf) alternates between the following songs as is dictated by the improvisations of the soloist (Akpón):

Oma ibo (Oba ibo) si aro  
Erwa (Era) mala ebo erawo  
Oba oso ache  
Kororo keye keye aguanileo  
Bembe sango ya  
Bembe ocha nilo da  
Kawo e kawo e  
Kawo e kabiesile o  
Aina buka  
Oba lube obo lube obo e  
Oba e obo yana yana

Band 6: **Cancelón—Bolero** (Música Campesina, recorded in Santiago de Cuba). Grupo Guitarras Internacionales.

The tradition of Spanish guitars and romantic poetry is one which influenced all of Spain's colonies in the New World. In Cuba, this Spanish root was responsible for *El Punto*, *La Décima*, *El Romance*, *La Guajira*, *El Bolero*, *La Canción*, *La Trova*<sup>1</sup>, *La Guaracha*, *La Tonada*, *El Zapateo*, and other forms. This is the music of the common peasant farmers of Spanish descent known as Guajiros or Campesinos. For this reason this music is generically called Música Guajira or Música Campesina. Aside from the indigenous *Areíto*<sup>2</sup>, it is probably the oldest documented style of Cuban music.

Solo voice with string accompaniment and improvisation form the basis of this style. A wide variety of stringed instruments were brought to the Americas by the Spanish colonists. Some of those which appeared in Cuba are the Guitar, the *Tres*, the *Bandurria*, the *Tiple*, the *Bordonua*, and the *Laúd*. Música Campesina became "Creolized" in Cuba through incorporation of such African elements as the *Botija*<sup>3</sup>, the *Marímbula*<sup>4</sup>, *Bongos* and *Conga* drums.

This example is typical of traditional Música Campesina. The text concerns love and patriotic nostalgia. The solo voice is accompanied only by stringed instruments. Notice that there is no alternation between the soloist and chorus as there is in the African-derived forms. Also, the first two verses are in triple meter, which was particularly common in Música Campesina through the nineteenth century, although the Bolero and the Canción are now commonly interpreted only in 2/4 time.

Vivir los paisajes Cubanos  
Donde pasan rios  
Allí hay un bohío  
Bajo el frágil dosel de verdor de un bambú  
El sol lanza toldos de oro  
De lo alto del cielo  
Y la palma mecer a la brisa  
En un armonioso su canto triunfar  
En cual cerca florida de aquel bohío  
Espera mi montunita soñando amores  
Y entonan lindas canciones los ruseñores  
A ver como besamos entre las flores.

To live in the Cuban countryside  
Where rivers flow  
There is a small thatched home  
Beneath the fragile green canopy of bamboo  
The sun sprays its golden rays  
From the depths of Heaven.  
And the palm sways in the breeze  
With its harmonious and glorious song  
In what florid enclosure of that bohío  
Awaits my little mountain girl  
dreaming about loves

And the nightingales sing their beautiful songs  
To see how we kiss among the flowers.

\*\*\*\*\*

<sup>1</sup>The Trova is the direct ancestor of the form known as Nueva Trova which is very popular in Cuba today. A few of the most important interpreters of the early Trova were Sindo Garay, Manuel Corona, Rosendo Ruiz, Alberto Villalón, and Pepe Sánchez. Two of the most popular interpreters of the Nueva Trova are Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés.

<sup>2</sup>The Areíto was a form of social music and dance of the indigenous peoples of some of the Caribbean Islands. It was observed by the first Spanish colonists.

<sup>3</sup>The Botija is a clay jug with two openings; one blown into and the other covered with the hand or left open to provide different tonalities. It can be tuned by adding water. Used to provide bass melody in African music.

<sup>4</sup>The Marímbula is a large wooden box with metal flanges suspended over an opening. Sound is produced by plucking the flanges. Also used to provide bass melody in African music.

## SIDE TWO

Band 1: **Pregones**. Recorded in Santiago de Cuba.

The Pregones are the cries of the street vendors. They recall a tradition which has disappeared from the cities of Cuba. These haunting melodies and rhythmic phrases were created by ambulatory street vendors who competed for the attention of housewives and passersby in order to sell their products. The best singers sold the most goods. This tradition was introduced to Cuba by the Spaniards, but soon took on a distinctly Cuban flavor when the Cuban vendors began incorporating elements from various facets of Cuban folklore. Before long, Cuban composers began borrowing melodies and lyrics from the most popular Pregones to create new musical compositions.

It is interesting to note the similarity between some of the Pregones and Spanish Flamenco style singing. The Moors from North Africa dominated Spain and the entire Iberian Peninsula for some 800 years. The nasal sounding vocal style typical of Flamenco singing is said to have developed under this Moorish influence. This quality of singing can also be heard in North Africa and the Middle East, indicating yet another strain of African influence in Cuban music.

In these four Pregones, the vendedores (vendors) are very profound in describing their products. The language is beautiful and poetic yet extremely colloquial. For this reason, we have restrained from offering detailed interpretation. The order of the four Pregones is as follows:

A: **El Frutero**. He is selling pineapples, mangos, mameyes, coconuts, melons and other fruit.

B: **El Tamalero**. He is offering hot tamales and refers to Romeo and Juliet and Adam and Eve in his poetry.

C: **El Panadero**. Baked goods are for sale here in specific quantities. The vendor asks God to help him sell his products.

D: **El Pescadero**. Fresh fish is being offered here, but hurry if you want some, because the vendor is leaving!

Band 2: **Conga Santiaguera**. Recorded in Santiago de Cuba. (Instrumental).

The Conga as used here is a dance and musical form which is connected with Carnival in Cuba. The dance is choreographed for large groups of people who with much fanfare and thematic, often elaborate costumes, parade in the streets accompanied by banners, floats, farolas (fancy, decorated lights and/or ornaments swirled on a long pole), and musicians. These groups are known as Comparsas, whose history is also very colorful.

During the colonial period, groups of slaves with mutual ethnic backgrounds (*Cabildos* or *Sociedades de Negros de Nación*) were organized to do abolitionist work and to continue cultural traditions of each group. Sometimes they were vehemently persecuted for their "lewd and covert" activities. However, sometimes they were able to get permission from the Spanish authorities to form parades in the streets of the cities where they would come out with costumes, dances, songs and music of their respective African tribes and nations. This would usually coincide with Catholic holidays or other public celebrations.

Eventually, the tradition grew into huge annual celebrations in which thousands of people would participate. Because of their mass appeal, the *Congas de Comparsas* became extremely effective for commercial and political advertising. The popularity of the well known Comparsa song "La Chambelona" is said to have decided the 1920-21 election in Cuba in which General García Menocal was ousted from the office of President. During the years of struggle for independence from Spain in the latter part of the 19th century, weapons, medicine and information were smuggled inside the drums of the Comparsas to aid the *Mambises* (revolutionary guerrillas).

The most well-known Carnival celebrations occur in Santiago (the original capital) and in La Habana (official capital since 1607). They have many similarities, but are distinct in certain aspects of instrumentation and musical structure. This piece is a good example of the Conga style from Santiago, identifiable by instrumentation; the brake-drum from a car wheel is struck with a metal rod to clearly produce the steady rhythm which permeates the entire piece. This instrument is referred to simply as *Hierro* (literally, iron). The *Bokú* is a tapered, cylindrical drum, open at both ends with a skin stretched over the larger opening. This instrument is similar in function and in sound to the well-known barrel-shaped Conga drums more common in the *Congas Habaneras*. The *Bombo* is the largest drum of the battery both in size and in sound. It is a double-headed bass drum played on one head with a mallet and dampened as desired on the other head to change the tonality. The *Galleta* is similar to the Bombo in the way that it is played, but it is a relatively flat drum in shape (about 8 inches high X 22 inches diameter). A third drum about 10 inches high is sometimes also used. It is called *Pilonera*.

Additionally, other drums which are played in a similar fashion to the Bombo and the Galleta (one mallet and one open hand) are often used in the Conga Santiaguera, especially in the style from Santiago known as *Conga Carabalí*. They are known as the *Respondedora* and the *Fondeadora* which is the smallest.

Missing from this recording are the *Cha Chá* or *Maruga* which are shaker-type instruments common to the style, and the shrill sound of the *Trompeta China* (Sona or Mussette), a double-reed horn which is probably the most identifiable instrument of the Congas Santiagueras.

Band 3: **Son**. "Soneros Son" Recorded in the Casa de la Trova in Santiago de Cuba. Estudiantina Invasora.

The Afro-Cuban Son is probably the most important form of Cuban music in terms of its influence and relevance to popular music over the last 100 years. It is the granddaddy of modern-day *Salsa*. The Son was originally a dance of Campesino extraction which also underwent an extensive process of evolution.



The Son was being played in *Oriente* (the mountainous eastern-most province of Cuba) about the time slavery ended in Cuba (1880s). African elements such as percussive instruments, call-and-response vocal structure and rhythmic musical structure were added to the Spanish elements of guitar-like instruments and Coplas or Décimas as verses for solo voice. In this early stage of the Son, the usual instrumentation was Tres, Guitar, Marimbula or Botija (providing the bass line), Bongo, Claves, Guiro and/or Maracas.

Beside the instrumentation, the most distinctive character of this Afro-Cuban style Son is the *Montuno* section of the music. This is the "funky" section in which the vocal soloist alternates with the chorus after the simple verses at the beginning of the piece. The Montuno aspect of the Son revolutionized Cuban music as it was added to the Danzón, the Bolero, the Guajira, the Guaracha and other styles. The instrumentation of groups which interpreted the Son evolved into sextetos, septetos, conjuntos and jazz bands. In today's Salsa many elements such as the Montuno, the Coro, the Bongos, the musical structure, the use of the "Clave feeling" and the choreography, are all directly taken from the Son.

The decades of the 20's through the 40's were an important era for the Son. It became established in the capital, La Habana and from there experienced diffusion across Cuba and in Europe and the rest of the Americas. Some of the most important figures of the Son in this stage were: The Sexteto Habanero, The Septeto Nacional de Ignacio Pineiro and the Conjunto of Arsenio Rodríguez.

The group which interprets this Son is the Estudiantina Invasora from Santiago de Cuba. The *Estudiantinas* were groups that interpreted the Son around 1900 in Santiago. They were usually larger than the typical Son groups of that time consisting of more stringed instruments and using the *Paila Criolla* or *Timbales* instead of the Bongos.

In this typical Son Afro-Cubano, called "Sonero Son," the first section is short and simple, while the emphasis lies in the Montuno section. The author is Pedro Fernandez, whose voice can be heard in the introduction before the tune begins.

Esos es mi Son, bailalo bien  
Es todo Cubano, gózalo mi hermano  
Ha paseado el mundo, mi Son Cubano  
Este es mi Son Cubano.

This is my Son, dance it well  
It is purely Cuban, enjoy it my brother  
My Cuban Son has travelled around the world  
This is my Cuban Son.

Band 4: **Guaracha**. Recorded in the Casa de la Trova in Santiago de Cuba. Estudiantina Invasora.

The Guaracha is originally a form of Música Campesina. However, it developed into another good example of the typical Cuban fusion of African and Spanish-derived elements. As was common in most of the Música Campesina, the Guaracha had a triple feel to the meter. Eventually, it was interpreted also in 2/4 time, and now the elements of the Guaracha which

influence popular music are almost exclusively in 2/4 time. Generally, the text of a Guaracha is humorous or satirical, traditionally sung in the Spanish style of Coplas or verses with string accompaniment and later adding the customary African chorus refrain (*Estribillo*) sung in alternation with the soloist. During the 19th century, largely due to the Cuban vernacular theatre

(*Teatro Bufo*), the Guaracha's popularity spread and later passed into the dance halls.

In this piece, a comical description is given of a young man who is quite a character in the neighborhood. The verse (which is given here) sets up the chorus (Coro) upon which the vocal soloist freely improvises in call-and-response form:

En el barrio donde vivo  
Hay un sujeto burlón  
Que siempre esta acaparando  
Y entrando en combinacion

Compra barato  
Y vende muy caro  
Ya se le rompio la cabuya  
Es un barbaro en la evolución.

In the neighborhood where I live  
There is a funny character  
Who is always capitalizing,  
Wheeling and dealing

He buys cheaply  
And sells very expensively  
Now he is at the end of the line  
He is a monster of evolution.

Band 5: **Danza Campesina**. Recorded in Santiago de Cuba. (Instrumental). Grupo Guitarras Internacionales.

The Danza was a development of the Contradanza which was introduced into Cuba by the French at the end of the 18th century. Later, during the 19th century, the world-famous Habanera and Danzón were to emerge from the Contradanza and the Danza. All of these forms were generally interpreted by *Orquestas Típicas* which were bands made up of woodwind, brass, string and percussive instruments. The Spanish Campesinos adapted these forms to their own instrumentation of guitar-family stringed instruments, thus expanding their musical repertoire. Adaptations of various musical genres into Música Campesina, such as in this interpretation, are common throughout Latin America.

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(Recorded in Cuba by Andrew Schloss)

Ethnic Folkways FE 4065. New York, 1981.

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Cover photo by Brad Graves. Cover art work: *Ireme* figure made by Juan "El Negro" Raymat in New York City in 1982. *Ireme* is the most picturesque personality of the Cuban Abakuá religion. His characteristic costume and choreography are unique in Afro-cuban folklore.

This album is dedicated to the brilliant Cuban percussionist Daniel Ponce, who has had an enormous cultural impact on American music since his arrival in 1980. Tremendo persona, músico, talento y amigo...