

VOLUME TWO

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4282

# THE ISLAND OF ESPAÑOLA

## Music from the Dominican Republic



Recorded by Verna Gillis With Ramón Daniel Perez Martinez





ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4282

Side 1

Band 1: Los Chuines  
4 men chorus

Band 2: "Sarandunga"  
vocal with 3 tambora, guiro

Side 2

Band 1: "Morena Linda" (Beautiful Black Woman)  
Guitar vocal, Maraccas

Band 2: "Caminan las Nubes" (The Clouds are Moving)  
Guitar voice, Maraccas

Band 3: Instrumental  
Guitar, Maraccas

Band 4: "Guay, guay, guay"  
tonada womens chorus  
3 palos, Maraccas

Band 5: "El Tobacco" Tonada  
Vocal, 3 Palos, Maraccas

Band 6: Tonada  
Vocal, 3 Palos, Maraccas

Band 7: Salves  
Vocal, 3 Palos, Maraccas

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. 76-750412

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THE ISLAND  
OF ESPAÑOLA  
Music from the  
Dominican Republic  
Recorded by Verna Gillis  
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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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# THE ISLAND OF ESPAÑOLA

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Vol. 2

Lying mid-way between Puerto Rico and Cuba in the West Indies is the Dominican Republic, which occupies the eastern two-thirds of an island, the other of which is Haiti. It is the largest of the Greater Antilles.

The aboriginal name of the island was *Quisqueya* which means "mother of the earth." When Columbus discovered the island in 1492 he re-named it "Espanola." Santo Domingo, founded in 1496, is the capital city.

In this oldest city of the New World one still sees the remains of the first church built in America. Its foundations were laid in 1502. Here is the house where Cortes kept the court records before he had ever heard of Mexico. From here Ponce de Leon set out in search for the Fountain of Youth. Here lived Pizarro before he went to Panama and sailed down the west coast to conquer the Inca Empire. Here, Padre de las Casas entered the priesthood and, ironically, in indignation because of the abuse of the Indians by the Spaniards, began to import slaves from Africa to make work lighter for the Indian laborers. Here was founded the first University in the New World when in 1538 a royal charter was granted for the establishment of the University of St. Thomas. Here, a tribal queen named Anacaona gave the earliest demonstration of native dances in the New World. Here we have the first attempted insurrection in the New World.

There were two main Spanish settlements in two separate areas — one in and around Santo Domingo, and in the north in the lowlands of the Cibao. The rapid destruction of the indigenous population by epidemics of disease introduced by the Spanish colonialists took away the very basis of economic prosperity in "espanola" and greatly changed the livability of the island in Spanish terms.

Half a century before the discovery of the Dominican Republic, there had been a series of explorations and discovery voyages initiated on the western coast of Africa. These voyages were patronized and encouraged by the Portuguese. This in turn led to the discovery of Guinea and to the slave business. There was a slave company that worked via Seville and which supplied the Americas with slaves brought from Guinea, Angola, Cabo Verde, Congo, etc. The Spanish seem to have shown a preference for slaves from Guinea as the Spaniards considered them as the "...happiest and most musically inclined ones."

In connection with the declining indigenous population, by 1518 the importation of slaves really began to increase and statistics dated 1606 give a breakdown of the population as follows:

Total Population	- 10,817
White	1,069
Black	9,748
Slaves	9,698
Free blacks	50
per cent of blacks	81%
per cent of slaves	80%

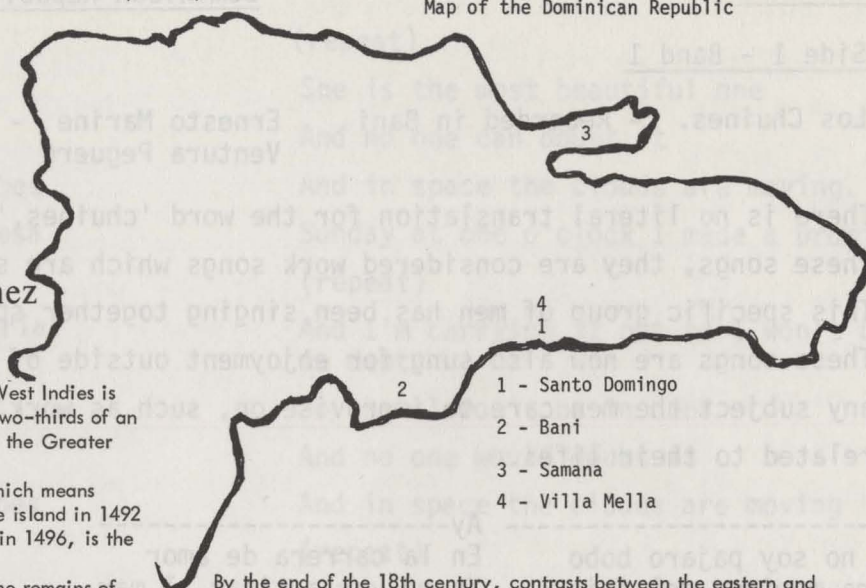
Today, of the total population, it is estimated that only 15% is of pure European origin; blacks make up about 15% of the total and mulattoes make up about 70%.

During the government of Diego Colon, Christopher Colon's (Columbus') brother, it was decreed that all slaves should be christians. It was also authorized that each inhabitant should have a female slave for domestic services.

In 1522 the first insurrection in the New World took place by the Isabel River in Azua. This insurrection failed.

After 1550 the Spaniards were attracted elsewhere and the communities on Espanola were neglected. In the Cibao, where the indigenous population had been growing tobacco long before the arrival of Columbus, this crop continued and was the main product of export. Today, sugar is the main industry and export item.

Map of the Dominican Republic



- 1 - Santo Domingo
- 2 - Bani
- 3 - Samana
- 4 - Villa Mella

By the end of the 18th century, contrasts between the eastern and western parts of the island began to appear. In Haiti, the French colony, 88% of a total population of 524,000 were slaves brought from Africa. In the Dominican Republic there were 103,000 inhabitants of whom 30% were slaves.

The last decade of the 18th century was one of violent disorder leading to the ruin of the colonial economy. Ownership of Espanola passed from Haiti to the Dominican Republic and back and forth again. In 1804 Haiti declared its independence from the French. The Spanish colony declared its independence from Spain in 1821 and with this slavery was abolished. At this point Haiti invaded and took control of the entire island. The island was then ruled by President Peter Boyer. In 1824 he contacted a black immigration from Philadelphia and offered them the privilege of civil and political rights. That same year, 6000 black American immigrants landed in Santo Domingo on November 29th and December 4th. They were sheltered in an old convent called "Las Mercedes" which they used as a Methodist Church. They were distributed to many parts of the country. The three main settlements were in Samana, Puerto Plata and Monte Criste. The black immigrants to Samana were the first to bring Protestantism to the Dominican Republic which is a Catholic country.

It wasn't until 1844 that the Dominicans were able to push the Haitians back and finally gain the status of an independent country. In 1869 the people of the Dominican Republic voted to ask for adoption by the United States but at that time the United States didn't want the responsibility of additional territory.

In 1916 the United States illegally occupied the Dominican Republic. This was during World War I and the U.S. reason for these actions was the necessity felt by the government to secure approaches to the Panama Canal. This foreign occupation ended in 1924.

In 1930, General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molino was elected president. The "tyranny of Trujillo" lasted thirty two years, ending with his brutal murder.

In 1965 the United States military landed for the second time in the Dominican Republic. This time it was in an "attempt to normalize" a government that was being threatened by a leftist attempt to take over the government. This brief occupation ended with the election of Pres. Balaguer who is still in office.

Recorded in January, 1976 by Verna Gillis with Ramon Daniel Perez Martinez

Cover photograph by Verna Gillis

All other photographs by Verna Gillis and Ramon Perez

Editing and notes by Verna Gillis

## Suggested Bibliography

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William Morrow & Company, Inc., New York, 1974



Side 1 - Band 1

Los Chuines. - Recorded in Bani      Ernesto Marine - vocal      Santiago Guerrero vocal  
    Ventura Peguero      vocal      Armando Perez      vocal

There is no literal translation for the word 'chuines.' According to the men singing these songs, they are considered work songs which are sung unaccompanied in the fields. This specific group of men has been singing together sporadically for ten years. These songs are now also sung for enjoyment outside of work. The themes can deal with any subject the men care to improvise on, such as work, politics, women - anything related to their lives.

Ay-----	Ay-----	Ay-----
Yo no soy pajarito bobo	En la carrera de amor	They are preaching love
Para morirme del frío	Yo me voy a tirar al mar	To women who have husbands
Le tan publicando amores	Y que me troce un pejecito, ay,	I have my nicely cuddled black
A mujer con su marido	Yo tengo pluma en mi cuerpo	babe
(repeat last line)	Ay, ay, ay,	Ay, ay, ay,
	Me atrebo a volar bajito.	By killing them secretly
 Ay-----	 Ay-----	 Ay-----
Le tan publicando amores	I'm not a dumb old bird	In the career of love
A mujer con su marido	To die of the cold.	I'm going to throw myself into
Yo tengo mi negra ñoña	They are preaching love	the sea
Ay, ay, ay,	To women who have husbands	So that a little fish can devour
De matarl' econdido.	(repeat last line)	me
		I have a feather in my body
		Ay, ay, ay
		I can fly low.

Side 1 - Band 2

"Sarandunga" - Recorded in Bani

Amancia Perez - singer  
 Carlos Enriques - tambora  
 Raphael Peguero - tambora

Carlos Peguero - tambora  
 Manuel Ventura - guiro



Elvira Diaz (front) - Villa Mella



The tambora is a two-headed, barrel shaped drum, played with the hands and a stick. The guiro is a scraper that was originally made out of a gourd. The one in use throughout the Dominican Republic is made of metal and scraped with a metal stick.

Part 1 - Bomba (same rhythm as Capitana)

Part 2 Jacana

The 'Sarandunga' is the name of a feast which is celebrated with three dances and a procession. The names of the dances are Capitana, Bomba, and Jacana. The procession is called Moranos. These four elements are practiced by the same people, played with the same drums, and celebrated on the same date. There is not any one dance that is called Sarandunga. Sarandunga is the generic name.

The Capitana, Bomba, and Jacana are performed during the feast of the Sarandunga, the night of June 23rd until dawn on June 24th. It is the day to honor St. John the Baptist. Any member of the Brotherhood of St. John may offer a promise to the Saint by way or a dance and keeping vigil that night. The Sarandunga celebration takes place in the house of Amancia Perez, in the upper part of the town of Bani. Amancia Perez 'inherited' St. John many years ago.

The Moranos procession is sung while the people are in the process of carrying the statue of Saint John, that is kept in Amancia's house, to the river. They all stand by the shore of the river to wait for the sun to come up. When it does, one of the members of the Brotherhood, in the Capitana, who is carrying a red cross, moves the flag of this cross which represents the Saint, into the water and then proceeds to splash water on the people present and on the statue of the Saint. In previous years people were supposed to have bathed together during the celebration, but now the river has run dry so that they only wet their faces.

From the river the Saint is then taken to Mass. After Mass it visits all of the members of the Brotherhood in their houses and finally returns to the house of Amancia Perez where there will be a big feast.

The Capitana and Bomba resemble each other so closely as to only constitute one dance. During these sections one of the men will hold a handkerchief for the entire duration. The Jacana is a slower dance and generally done at night when the initial excitement and noise from the Capitana and Bomba have cooled off a bit. The Sarandunga is one of many excellent examples of syncretism between Africa and the Catholic church in the Dominican Republic.

\* \* \* \* \*

Side 2 - Band 1 "Morena Linda" (Beautiful Black Woman) by Tomás Aguino

Recorded in Los Cacaos, Samana

Guitar and vocal - Tomás Aguino de León - 34 years old

Maraccas - Maria Isabel Trinidad - 26 years old

Tomás and Maria are brother and sister. They both became blind in early childhood.



Tomás works in a bakery.

Text in Spanish (partial)

Ya yo me siento contento

Text in Spanish

Gosando mi noche buena

Bebiendo me una sopita

Con una linda y bella morena.

Yo le digo morenita

A mi no me olvides mas

Por que si a mi tu me olvida

Mi negra linda voy a llorar.

Por que si a mi tu me olvida,

Mi negra linda voy a morir.

Ay, morena linda, quiere me a mi.

Ay, de madrugada, quiere me a mi.

De mananita, quiere me a mi

Por que yo te quiero, quiere me a mi

Amanaciendo, quiere me a mi

Eres mia, quiere me a mi

Que yo soy tuyo, quiere me a mi

De madrugada, quiere me a mi

Para comerte, quiere me a mi

Para besarte, quiere me a mi

Spoken:

Ah ver la flauta conpadre

Ahora los palos

\* \* \* \* \*

Band 2 "Caminan las Nubes" (The Clouds are Moving) by Tomás Aguino

Guitar and voice - Tomas Aguino de León

Maraccas - Maria Isabel Trinidad

Text in Spanish (partial)

Padre San Antonio mi lego no eres

(repeat)

Lleve me a la gloria mañana a la nueve

(repeat)

Mañana a la nueve que no hay quien lo dude

y por el espacio caminan las nubes

De la iglesia sale una mariposa

(repeat)

English Translation

I feel happy

English Translation

Enjoying my Christmas Eve

Drinking a good soup

With a beautiful and pretty black woman.

I tell her, little black one,

Don't forget me again,

Because if you forget me

My beautiful black one I am going to cry

Because if you forget me

My beautiful black one I am going to die.

Ay, beautiful black one, love me.

Ay, at dawn, love me,

Ay, from early morning, love me,

Because I love you, love me.

Waking up , love me,

You are mine, love me,

I am yours, love me,

At dawn, love me

In order to eat you, love me,

In order to kiss you, love me

Spoken:

Let's see the flute,

now the 'palos.' \* \*drums

English Translation

Father St. Anthony I am not ignorant of you

(repeat)

Take me to glory tomorrow at nine

(repeat)

Tomorrow at nine and there's no one who  
doubts it

And in space the clouds are moving.

A butterfly leaves the church

(repeat)



Que Maria la Virgen es la más hermosa

(repeat)

Y la más hermosa

que no hay quien lo dude

Y por el espacio caminan las nubes

Domingo a la una mande una promesa

(repeat)

Y la estoy pagando para no deberla

Para no deberla

que no hay quien lo dude

Y por el espacio caminan las nubes

(repeat)

\* \* \* \* \*

Band 3 - Instrumental

Guitar - Tomás Aguino de León

Maraccas - Maria Isabel Trinidad

\* \* \* \* \*

Band 4 - "Guay, guay, guay" - Recorded in Savana Perdida, Villa Mella

This is a tonada, a secular song sung by women

Lead singer- Elvira Diaz

Palos- Pablo Jiron

Palos - Bederminio Enriques

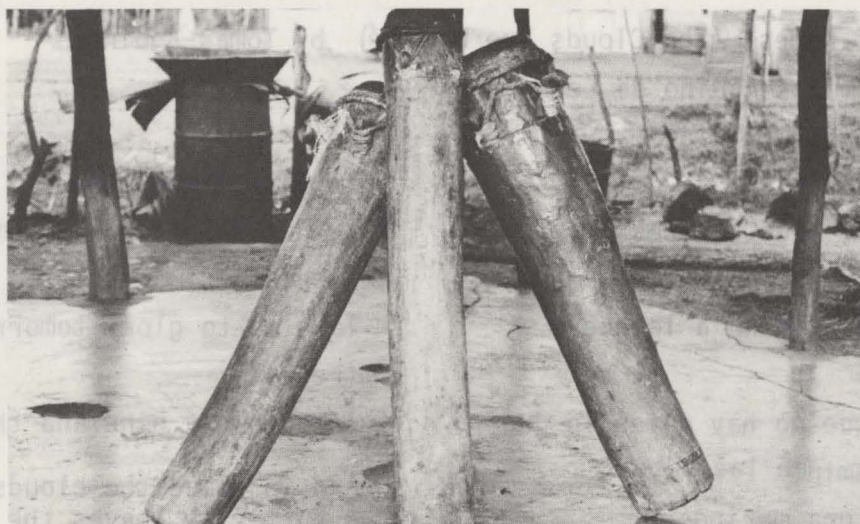
Palos - Saturninio Enriques

Maraccas- Mildred Alberto

The palos are drums of African origin which can be heard throughout most of the Dominican Republic. The palos are cylindrical drums carved out of a single piece of wood.

They are hollowed out and covered with a goat skin. The skins are pegged.

They come in two sizes - Palo Mayor is approximately five feet high, with a head 11" in diameter. Palo menor is approximately 34" high and 9" in diameter.



Palos - Savana Perdida, Villa Mella

Virgin Mary is the most beautiful one

(repeat)

She is the most beautiful one

And no one can doubt it

And in space the clouds are moving.

Sunday at one o'clock I made a promise

(repeat)

And I'm carrying it out so I won't be in debt.

So that I won't be in debt

And no one would doubt it

And in space the clouds are moving

(repeat)

Band 5 - "El Tobaco" - Tonada

Lead singer - Elvira Diaz  
Palos - Pablo Jiron  
Palos - Bederminio Enriques  
Palos - Saturniño Enriques

Maraccas Mildred Alberto

Side 2 Band 6 - Tonada

Lead singer - Elvira Diaz  
Palos - Pablo Jiron  
Palos - Bederminio Enriques  
Palos - Saturniño Enriques

Maraccas Mildred Alberto

\* \* \* \* \*

Band 7 - Salves, a religious song of supplication to the Virgin Mary. Recorded in

Savana Perdida, Villa Mella

Lead singer - Elvira Diaz

Palos - Pablo Jiron

Palos - Bederminio Enriques

Palos - Saturniño Enriques

Maraccas - Mildred Alberto

\* \* \* \* \*

Cover Photograph : Ventura Peguero and Ernesto Marine singing  
"chuines" in Bani