

VOLUME THREE

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4283

CRADLE OF THE NEW WORLD

Music from the Dominican Republic



Recorded by Verna Gillis With Ramón Daniel Perez Martinez



ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4283

Side 1

- Band 1: "Mummies"
vocal with fife, kettle drum, bass drum, triangle
- Band 2: "Los Congos del Espiritu Santo"
"Camino Reale" (The Real Path)
vocal with maraccas, palo mayor, Alcahuete, Canoa
- Band 3: Los Congos
"Ensilla Mi Caballo" (Saddle my Horse)
same instruments as above
- Band 4: Los Congos "Lambe los deos Manteca"
(Lick your finger, Manteca)
same instruments as above
- Band 5: Los Congos, "Le vamos a dar la Gracias"
(We're going to thank you.)
same instruments as above

Side 2

- Band 1: "Baile, cum, cum, baile"
a Bambula
vocals, palo mayors, Maraccas
- Band 2: "Ave Maria, Ilena de Gracia," a Salves
(Hail Mary, full of Grace)
vocals with chorus
- Band 3: "Yo traigo un lirio"
(I bring a bouquet)
vocal with accordion, palo mayor
- Band 4: "Viejo luis" a Bambula
vocal with maraccas palo mayor
- Band 5: Three children's songs
- Band 6: "Navidad Sin mi Madre" - cumbia
(Christmas without my mother)
Accordion, Guiro, Tambora

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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Vol. 3

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%

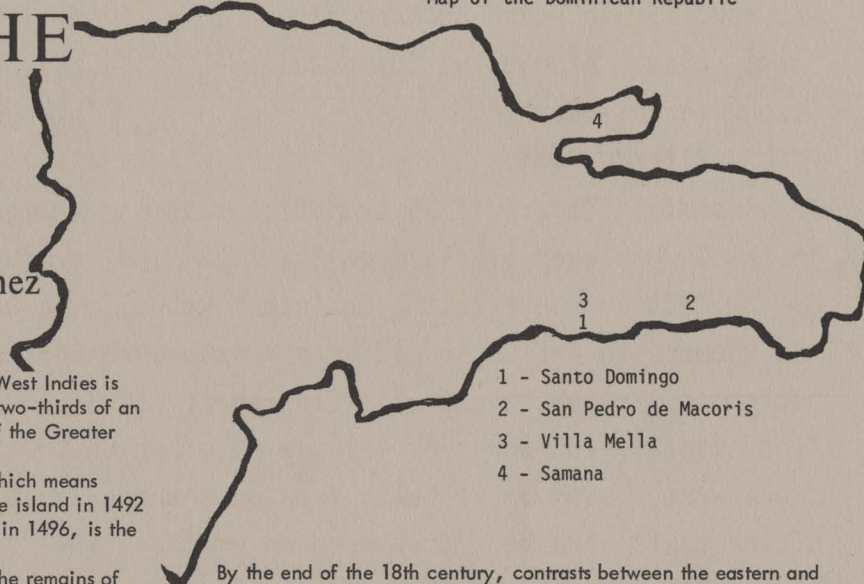
Today, of the total population, it is estimated that only 15% is of pure European origin; blacks make up about 15% of the total and mulattoes make up about 70%.

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 - San Pedro de Macoris
- 3 - Villa Mella
- 4 - Samana

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 Malino 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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Roberts, John Storm. *Black Music of Two Worlds*. William Morrow & Company, Inc., New York, 1974

Side 1 - Band 1 - "Mummies"

Recorded in San Pedro de Marcoris
First voice - Theophilus Chiverton
Second voice - Gerald George
Fife - Alfredo Paris

Kettle drum - Manuel Arab
Bass drum - Jesus Manuel Román
Triangle - Agripino Hernandez

The "Mummies" is a British tradition that was brought to the Dominican Republic in the 1920's when blacks from St. Kitts and Nevis islands which had been colonized by the British, came to the Dominican Republic to work. The traditional time for the mummies to act their old dramas is around Christmas and this is when it is performed, in the streets, in San Pedro.

Traditionally the words of the plays, of which the "Mummies" is only one of nine, were passed on verbally from one generation to the next so that very few of the texts have been preserved in writing. The theme is generally that of death and rebirth of nature. There is usually one character called St. George, or some times King George or Prince George, and another is the Turkish knight who is killed and resurrected by the doctor. These mummies plays had their origins in pagan times when human sacrifice was part of life, and in mankind's attempt to regain the favor of the gods who seemed to have deserted them.

Theophilus Chiverton, in whose back yard we recorded, is 65 years old and came to the Dominican Republic more than fifty years ago with his parents. He proudly proclaims "I am a British!" and would never give up his British passport. However, this tradition, atleast in the Dominican Republic, seems to be drawing to an end because the children of these immigrants from St. Kitts and Nevis don't speak English, and there is a dwindling English-identified population. Mr. Chiverton told us that it's been more than twenty years since he's been able to perform the whole piece. There was just no one else to learn the parts. Now Mr. Chiverton doesn't even remember all of them. The instruments have been hand made



Musicians for the "mummies"

and belong to Mr. Chiverton. The instruments relate to European military bands, however the rhythms certainly relate to Africa as well.

The purpose of the plays, according to Theophilus Chiverton "is for good cheer!"

* * * * *

Partial Text

Good morning friends and neighbors here.	And when it gone it is no longer near.
We are quite glad to meet you all here.	May luck attend your milking pail
For Christmas come but once a year	When each wind blows over cotton field
And when it come it bring good cheer	Then our mummies time come round.

Band 2 "Los Congos del Espiritu Santo" - "Camino Reale" (The Real Path)

Recorded in Villa Mella

Lead singer and maraccas*- Bienvenida Vargas Depozo

Palo mayor* - Victoriano Fortunato Vargas

Alcahuete* - Vincente Vargas

Maraccas - Albertino "Moreno" Graciano

Canoa* - Donatilia Vargas

The palos are cylindrical drums carved out of a single piece of wood. They are hollowed out and covered with a goat skin. They come in two basic sizes - Palo Mayor is approximately five feet high, with a head 11" in diameter. Palo menor is approximately 34" high and 9" in diameter.

Alcahuete - Smaller drum

Canoita - Instrument made of wood with a handle in a rectangular shape which is struck with a wooden stick held in the other hand. It adds rhythmic accompaniment.

Maraccas - Made from the fruit of a dried higuero filled with small rocks or seeds. Generally played in pairs and often the lead singer is the same one who plays the maraccas to accompany oneself rhythmically.

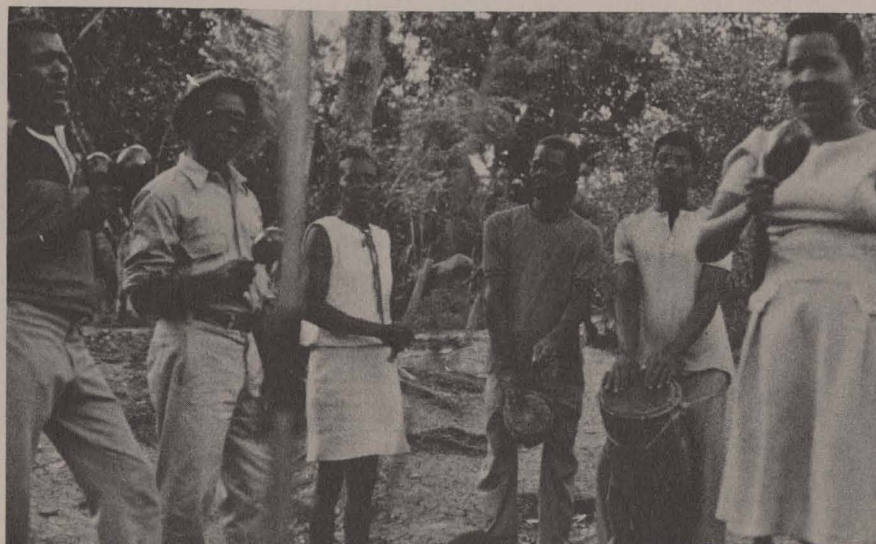
One informant told us the following concerning the origins of Los Congos:

" A Saint of the Holy Spirit was found in a guava field where there was a trunk of dried copal.(a type of tree.) This Saint was playing music for three nights. The Saint had the drums (mayor and menor) and the sticks (canoita). Turuvira (the name of a woman) was the owner of that land and she found the Saint and she raised the money and formed a brotherhood that developed into a church. The Saint was found with a book that contained 21 songs. This happened 90 to 100 years ago. It is completely Dominican but naturally it has African origins." The Feast of the Holy Ghost is the main time for Los Congos to perform, but it is also done at any funeral ritual. It can be performed at any time of year. Their performances are hardly ever absent from funeral rituals. This dance is still performed in church at the time of a funeral. The Brotherhood of the Holy Ghost makes a procession through the streets of the town after Mass. Instead of

dancing inside the church, three songs are played in honor of the Holy Spirit. To become a member of the brotherhood, a dove of silver must be placed on the candidate's right shoulder and the following oath must be taken: "I am a brother (or sister) of the Holy Spirit."

One person sings the lead verse and the chorus responds in a clear example of alternating solo/chorus, the antiphonal vocal style common to Africa that then made its appearance in the New World. It is believed that the present day dance of Los Congos relates back to a dance of unquestionable African influence called the calenda that was danced and always associated with religious festivities and that was prohibited in the 18th century in the Dominican Republic and was forced to become syncretized .

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Los Congos del Espiritu Santo - Villa Mella

Band 3 - Los Congos - "Ensilla Mi Caballo" (Saddle my Horse)

Lead singer and maraccas - Bienvenida Vargas Depozo

Palo Mayor - Victoriano Fortunato Vargas

Alcahuete - Vicente Vargas

Maraccas - Albertino "Moreno" Graciano

Canoa - Donatilia Vargas

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Band 4 - Los Congos - "Lambe los deos Manteca" (Lick your fingers, Manteca)

Lead singer and maraccas - Albertino "Moreno" Graciano

Palo Mayor - Victoriano Fortunato Vargas

Alcahuete - Vicente Vargas

Maraccas - Bienvenida Vargas Depozo

Canoa - Donatilia Vargas

Band 5 - Los Congos - "Le vamos a dar la Gracias." (We're going to thank you.)

Lead singer - Albertino "Moreno" Graciano

Palo Mayor - Victoriano Fortunato Vargas

Alcahuete - Vicente Vargas

Maraccas - Bienvenida Vargas Depozo

Canoa - Donatilia Vargas

* * * * *

Side 2 - Band 1 "Baile, cuma, cum, baile." - a Bambula*

Recorded in Samana

Maraccas - Dona Bertilia

Palo mayor - Jorge, Bertilia's son

Palo mayor - Benjamin Perez

Female singer - Dona Bertilia

Male singer - Nino, a friend of Bertilia's

*In Samana there is a dance called bambula. The drums played are palos and are laid on the floor and the player sits on them right up front at the head of the drum.

* * * * *

Band 2 - "Ave Maria, llena de Gracia." - a Salves* (Hail Mary, full of Grace)

Male singer - Nino

Female singer - Bertilia

Chorus: Benjamin Perez Jorge Bertilia Nino

*Salves are religious songs of supplication to the Virgin Mary.

Partial Text

Fue conservida

Limpia sin manchar

y era Maria

Llena de gracia

repeat above four lines

Palomita blanca

Encumbara tu vuelo

LLevale esta carta

al Rey de los cielos.

repeat above four lines

El Padre Santo

en su sacristia

Le presenta el Cristo

Hijo de Maria

repeat above four lines

* * * * *

English Translation

She was conceived

Clean without stains

It was Maria

Full of grace

repeat above four lines

Little white dove

Take this letter with you

in your flight

To the King of the skies

repeat above four lines

The Holy Father

in his sacristy

presents Christ

Son of Mary

repeat above four lines

Side 2 - Band 3 - "Yo traigo un lirio" - (I bring a bouquet)

Accordion - Seseco Martinez

Palo mayor - Jorge

Male singer - Nino

Partial Text

Yo traigo un lirio
de todas las flores
para la Virgen
hay de los Dolores
Niño chiquitico quitate del sol
Toma mi pañuelo
Secate el sudor
repeat first four lines
Dice san Ramon
que eres el peloto
que lo celebran
el 30 de agosto
repeat first four lines
La virgen del Carmen
se clavó una espina
cuido la llaga
con la medicina

* * * * *

Band 4 - "Viejo Luis" (Old Louis) a Bambula

Palo mayor - Jorge

Palo mayor - Benjamin Perez

Maraccas and female singer - Bertilia

Bertilia is ninety years old and although we never found out exactly how many children she has had, she told us that she has seventy grandchildren. She is tall, thin, and strong.

* * * * *

Band 5 - Three children's songs - Recorded in Seccion Acosta, Samana

1 - Text

Envuelto en un misterio
La vi pasar
Soltera iba llorando
luego entró a un viejo cementerio.
Es una crus
que se alejó llorando

English Translation

I bring a bouquet
of all the flowers
for the Virgin
of suffering.
Little child, get out of the sun.
Take my handkerchief
Wipe off your sweat.
repeat first four lines
Saint Raymond says
that you are the pilot
whom they celebrate
the 30th of August.
repeat first four lines
The Virgin of Carmen
stuck a spine
Protect the wound
with the medicine.

English Translation

Involved in a mystery
I saw her go by
alone. She was crying.
Then she entered an old cementary.
It is a cross
that left crying.

La volvi a ver
ya no lloraba
ante la cruz nada decia
con otro amante
el campo visitaba
al ver la vieja tumba
todo se reia.

Cojan ejemplo hombre de este mundo.
No crean en mujeres
ni tampoco en amigo
El amigo tuyo es un peso en el bolsillo
y una mujer amaba
su madre es querida

* **

2

Cuando yo me pongo
A gozar la noche entera
que yo voy por donde quiera
Pero para casa no hoy
En casa soy el que soy
y el que tengo los calsones
Quando vuelva a Pilonos
la mujer no me amena
Porque yo mande mi casa
y yo llevo los pantelones
repeat above two lines
Tu llevas los pantelones
sobre la tabla de planchar
Porque la mujer te manda
y te tiene que callar
a mi nadie me lo diga
mucho menos la mujer.
Ella lo que sabe hacer
es mandar en la cocina
este caso de la gallina
los gallos con espolones

I saw her again
She was not crying
She stood speechless in front of the
cross
with another love she visited the
countryside
Upon seeing the old tomb she was all
laughs.
Take this as an example men of this
world
Don't believe in women nor in friends
Your friend is a dollar in your pocket
and a loved woman
her mother is loved.

When I decide
To enjoy the whole evening
I go wherever I want to.
But today I'm not going home.
At home I am the one who is,
and he who wears the pants.
When I return to Pilonos
My woman doesn't threaten me
Because I rule in my house
and I wear the pants.
repeat above two lines
You have your pants
on the ironing board
because women rule you
and you can't say anything
Nobody better tell me
much less my woman
What she knows how to do
is to run the kitchen
The case of the chicken
chickens with big spurs

Yo no le aguanto sermones
porque no soy mete cien-cien,
en casa yo soy el jefe
y llevo los pantelones
En casa yo soy el jefe
y llevo los pantelones.

* * *

3

Perejil, perejiloso,
yo no se con quien me caso
con un hombre caballero que
tenga mucho dinero
Yo soy quien repalto el pan
yo soy quien repalto el vino
Yo soy quien me presento
este fiel cuerpo divino.

* * * * *

Band 6 - "Navidad Sin mi Madre" by Porfirio Rosario (Christmas without my mother)
Recorded in Santo Domingo - This is a cumbia which is the national dance of Colombia.
Accordion - Nicola Guitierre
Güiro - Porfirio Rosario
Tambora - Santo Peña

Cover Photograph : Erasmo Errera, Villa Mella

I don't listen to any of their sermons
because I'm not "mete cien-cien"
At home I'm the boss
and I wear the pants
At home I'm the boss
and I wear the pants

Perejil, perejiloso,
I don't know who I'll marry
with a gentleman who has much
money.
I am the one who brings in the bread
I am the one who brings in the wine
I am the one who presents
this faithful, divine body.