

NUEVA YORK

A tape documentary
of Puerto Rican New Yorkers.

Conceived, recorded and edited
by TONY SCHWARTZ



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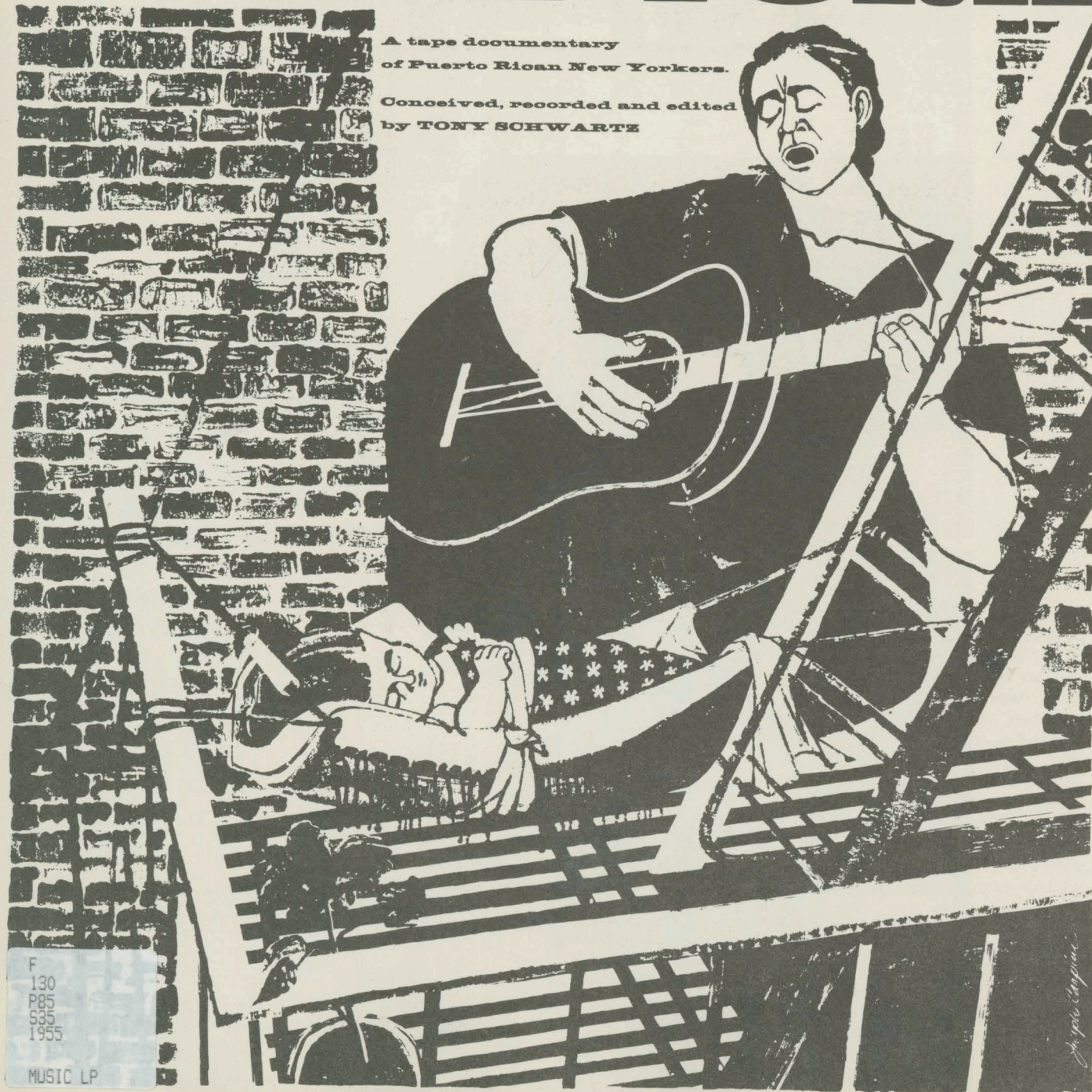
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FOLKWAYS RECORDS AND SERVICE CORP., N. Y.



NUEVA YORK

A tape documentary by TONY SCHWARTZ

"Nueva York" is a tape documentary of some aspects of the life of New Yorkers who have migrated from Puerto Rico.

In 1626, Manhattan Island was inhabited by several hundred non-English speaking Americans. In the years since, the population of this twenty-two square mile island has grown to over two million. This population growth was the result of the migration of many peoples. Almost all peoples are represented in New York City. Looking into the history of these migrations, one can see a definite pattern; migration from other countries to this city, at any given time, has been by large groups of people from the same place. Their reasons were varied. Some came for religious freedom, others for political freedom and still others for economic freedom.

When I was a child, I remember my father telling me about his parents' experiences in coming to New York from Europe. In future years I was shown places where they had first lived and worked.

In the 1940's and 1950's I saw Puerto Rican families moving into the same areas. I heard and saw situations that reminded me of the stories my father had told me. New Yorkers who a few years or a generation ago had been in the same situation were dealing with the Puerto Rican New Yorkers with the same misunderstanding they had been dealt.

The Puerto Rican comes here looking for work, or has been brought here as part of a group to do seasonal farm work. Many decide not to return home and send for their families. Even if he has come from a Puerto Rican city, the migrant is overwhelmed by New York, which makes his city seem like a small town.

What does the Puerto Rican migrant find? He is in a strange land, different customs, different language, and different climate.

"The poor Puerto Rican, who is in the vast majority, occupies a position in New York City which has been occupied





by millions from other ethnic groups before him — the bottom of the occupational pyramid. He shares that position with several hundred thousands of others who live in slum areas of the world's greatest metropolis. The life of the slum means now, as it has always meant, decrepit housing infested by rats and roaches, little fresh air and sunshine, overcrowded sleeping and living space, few playgrounds, rundown and understaffed schools, inadequate hospital and medical facilities. It means higher tuberculosis rates, more divorces, desertions, illegitimate children, vandalism, gang fights, truancy, dope addictions.** In addition he learns the meaning of discrimination and is apt to be reluctant to leave the Puerto Rican neighborhood. This limits his chances for broadening his horizons and seeing how others live.

In 1948 I saw I had a chance to document a migration of a people to New York. The record "Nueva York" is the result of 8 years of recording this material.

I feel there were two ways this documentary could have been done. One would be all in Spanish which only Spanish speaking people could understand, and the other would be with various forms of translation. Since I spoke no Spanish, I gravitated toward the latter. I think this form has enabled this record to be a bridge between the Puerto Rican New Yorker and the other New Yorkers, most of whom speak English. It is my hope that this record will bring some understanding of the problems a people have in moving to a new location, leaving their old homes and ways of life.

*Clarence Senior, Strangers & Neighbors, Pamphlet, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, N.Y.C. 1952

I would like to thank Dorothy Pierce for her help in the preparation of the notes and the section on education.

Much appreciation to Norma and Amador Chaidez, Ellen Simon and Jane Soyer for their help in the making of this record.

Special thanks to Joseph Carpini for the album cover drawing and the booklet drawings.

Tony Schwartz
Jan. 1956



CONTENTS OF RECORD

SIDE ONE

1. Airport Public Address System announcement.
2. Reason for migration.
3. Reason for migration.
4. Translation of juke box record "A Puerto Rican Peasant In New York."
5. Comment about travel in city.
6. Comment about being rejected.
7. West Side woman's comment.
8. Comment on housing discrimination.
9. Comment on housing discrimination.
10. Housing conditions comment.
11. Landlord comment.
12. Comment on food.
13. Comment on clothing.
14. Translation of juke box record "I'm Contagious."

15. Comment on literature.
16. Comment on motion pictures.
17. Interview in Unemployment Compensation office.
18. Song "Social Problem." This is a song about looking for work. A translation of the chorus will give an idea of its content.

"Look at me now, I'm a problem!
 Boy, oh boy . . . isn't that a hot one?
 Now . . . I'm called 'minority,'
 A real problem in sociology.
 All I want is to earn enough pay
 So I can feed my little family.
 I don't want charity . . . I don't shirk,
 All I want is just a chance to work."

SIDE TWO

1. A group of Puerto Rican New Yorkers — about 5:30 one Sunday afternoon — passing out leaflets and singing on the street. The leaflet told of church services that evening at their store-front church.
2. Recording of woman who lives above store-front church.
3. Song recorded inside store-front church one Saturday evening.
4. Teenage boys, in the street, dancing and beating on car fender, drums and cow bell.
5. Comment by one of the teenagers.
6. Owner of the Paladium telling about the Paladium and the Mambo.
7. Children's ring-game in the street. Similar in form to "London Bridge."
8. Description of game by one of the children.
9. Another street ring-game dealing with names.
10. Folk song "Juan Charrascado" (Scarface John) a song about a Mexican robber of the "Robin Hood" type. These two little girls were singing while drawing in a grade school class.
11. A humorous song "The Son Of My Uncle Has A Cold Upon His Chest." Recorded in same grade school class.
12. Comment of teacher.

13. Song, "My Little School."
14. Learning to speak English with rhythms.
15. Newly arrived children (8 yr. olds in 3rd grade) reciting the "Pledge of Allegiance" and singing "America."
16. "Little Red Riding Hood." A child struggling to learn English. Children's songs and stories are used to teach English.
17. Teacher's comment.
18. Song "La Borinquena." This song is sometimes considered the Puerto Rican National Anthem. It is played at many private and public gatherings. Many Puerto Ricans will stand and remove their hats when this song is played.

"Oh my land of Borinquen! The land where I was born,
 Garden so full of flowers, Magic'ly wonderful;
 Her sky forever luminous is as a dome of light,
 While at her feet the placid waves sing so melodious.
 When to her shores Columbus came,
 He cried in joy and wonderment: "'Oh. oh, oh,
 This is the land of beauty, The land I sought
 Oh Borinquen, the daughter, the daughter of sea and sun.'"

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- FP3 TAKE THIS HAMMER, *Lead Belly*
- FP4 WASHBOARD BAND, *Sonny Terry*
- FP5 ALL DAY SINGIN', *A. Van Wey*
- FP6 LONESOME VALLEY, *Folk Songs*
- FP7 DUST BOWL BALLADS, *Woody Guthrie*
- FP8 300 MILES (& OTHER RH. SONGS), *Houston*
- FP9 ROCK ISLAND LINE, *Lead Belly*
- FP10 SEA SHANTIES & LOGGERS-MEN SONGS
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- FP18 LEAD BELLY'S LEGACY, Vol. 4
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- FP20 MORMON FOLK SONGS, *L. M. Hilton*
- FP21 SONGS OF JOE HILL, *Joe Glazer*
- FP22 SMOKY MT. BALLADS, *Lansford*
- FP23 "LADY GAY", *Andrew R. Summers*
- FP24 HARD TRAVELIN', *Cisco Houston*
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