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*The Basques*

# EUZKADI!

SONGS AND DANCES OF THE BASQUE  
SUNG AND PLAYED BY JUAN ONATIBIA

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1954



MUSIC LP

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**THE BASQUES  
EUZKADI!**

THE BASQUES, EUZKADI, ONATIBIA

**FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 6830**

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*The Basques***EUZKADI!**

SONGS AND DANCES OF THE BASQUE

SUNG AND PLAYED BY JUAN ONATIBIA

Introduction and Notes on the Recordings  
by Juan Onatibia

The outstanding characteristics of Basque music and especially of the songs are its purity and delicacy of expression. The extraordinary abundance of this music is impressive particularly from such a small country as Euzkadi. The collections of P. Donosti and D. R. M. de Azkue -- whom we call "the saviours of Basque music" -- include about 1,500 melodies; the total would be more than 2,000 songs and dances.

Generally, the songs are syllabic and very appropriate for choral interpretation. Because of this there are a great number of Basque Choral groups.

The dance rhythms are built nearly always in the usual measures; c, 2/4, 3/4 and 6/8. In some cases varied measures mingle in strange irregularity. A typical example is the "Challenge" dance part of ceremonial dance "Aurreku." Its rhythmic contrasts require skill and dexterity from the dancers.

The *txistu* is the original flute that together with the *tun-tun* (small drum) constitute the typical Basque orchestra. Both instruments are played by the same interpreter known as *txistulari*, forming a one-man band.

The *txistu* has three holes with a range of two octaves. Its tonality is in F#. It is built in the Dorian mode and the chromatic scale can be executed, with neatness, making use of half open holes. (')

The small drum hangs from the *txistulari*'s left arm. He holds the drum-stick in his right hand and the flute in his left one.

Euzkadi is the one country in western Europe that has preserved its rich repertoire of dances from earliest times. In 1826, Juan de Iztueta, in his book "Guipuzkoa 'ko Dantzak" enumerates up to fifty different dances then performed in the province of Guipuzkoa, almost all of which are known and danced today.

The dances described in this album belong to one of several groups which include ceremonial, classic, religious, ritual, animals, work, exhibition and so forth.

1. Complete details about its technique and execution can be found in the book EUZKADI, The Land of The Basques.

SIDE I, Band 1. EZPATA-DANTZA. The "Ezpata-dantza" is a musical suite composed of several melodies and varied choreography. Usually it is danced as follows:

1. Kurrinarena (The Flag Dance)
2. Zortzinako (Eight by Eight)
3. Banako (One by One)
4. Makil-dantza (The Stick Dance)
5. Binako (Two by Two)
6. Ezpata-dantza (The Stick Dance)
7. Txankarrenku (The Dance of the Victor)

Parts 2, 3, 5, and 7 are melodies composed in combined measures of 6/8 and 3/4 in regular succession and are very characteristic of these dances from Bizkaya.

The "Ezpata-dantza" (Sword Dance) properly called Warriors Dance is considered the National Dance.

When the Spanish and French governments abrogated Basque freedom by suppressing their ancient rights and laws, early in the 19th century, Jose Maria de Iparraguirre gave new hope and inspiration to the people who had suffered much in the Carlist Civil Wars. He stirred them with his music and songs. His anthem to the Tree of Guernika (symbol of Basque freedom) remains one of the foremost patriotic hymns.

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Iparragirre, the bard, wrote the songs he sang in the form of the dotted "zortziko." The origin and interpretation of the zortziko has created much controversy. This Basque rhythm is the 5/8 measure. Some music critics assign to the zortziko an exotic origin. Others are convinced that the rhythm is an erroneous interpretation of the 6/8 measure. These explanations fail to take into account the evolution of the rhythm from the primitive zortziko to the appearance of Iparragirre's melodies. The first manifestations of this rhythm are a few melodies that go back to the Middle Ages. Later, dances were born out of this rhythm. These new melodies brought an innovation - the dot; this characteristic harmonizes the music with the strength and agility of Basque dances. Great numbers of these melodies are found in the "Makil-dantza" from the province of Guipuzkoa.

Because of the popularity of this form, many zortzikos were composed in a sentimental mood devoid of true Basque character.



#### SIDE I, Band 2. CRADLE SONGS.

"Loa, Loa" (Sleep, Sleep) is in the Aeolian mode.

The mother entertains her infant child with the combination of the word Kutun (darling) in the song "Tun-Kurrun-Kutun."

#### LOA, LOA

Loa, loa, txun-txurrun berde,  
Loa, loa, masusta.  
Aita guria Gazteitz 'en da  
Ama manduan artu-ta.

.....  
Aita guria gazteitz 'en da  
Ama manduan artu-ta.  
Aita guriak diru asko du  
Ama bidean saldu-ta.

(Sleep, sleep, my sweet,  
Father has gone to Vitoria  
Taking mother astride a mule.

.....  
Father has plenty of money  
After selling and giving  
mother away.)

SIDE I, Band 3. AURRESKU. This is the most characteristic and distinguished ceremonial dance of the Basques. On occasions, it is danced by the main authorities of the country: councilors, mayors and deputies. It is a classical dance executed in honor of the ladies. It has different parts in the form of a suite. The most outstanding are:

1. The Aurrez-aurre (Challenge)  
(between the first and last dancers of the line formed by men only.)
2. Andere-dantza (The Dance of the Lady)  
(a Contrapas executed by the first man of the line in honor of the lady of his choice. Immediately after, the last man of the line repeats this figure.)
3. Axeri-dantza (The Dance of the Fox)  
(every man in the line dances, one after the other, displaying his skill and humor.)
4. After each dancer in the line has been joined by his partner, the Challenge is executed for the second time. Everyone in the line joins together with their handkerchiefs.
5. Finally, an ensemble performance by men and women interpreting the "Astirokoa" (Fandango or Jota) and "Arin-Arin" (Fast Dance), ending with "Biribilketa" a sort of street dance.

This folklore treasure has been kept in all its purity in the provinces of Bizcaya and Guipuzkoa.

#### SIDE I, Band 4. CHRISTMAS SONGS.

##### OI, BETLHEM

Oi, Bethlem! )  
Etorri da zure garaya. )  
Oi, Bethlem! ) Bis  
Ongi bai du distiratzan, )  
Zuganik eldu den argiak )  
Betetzen-tu bazter guziak. )  
Oi, Betlehem! Oi, Bethlem! ) Bis.

(Oh Bethlehem!  
Your hour is come.  
And the light that you shed  
Extends itself everywhere.)

##### O EGBERRI GAUA

O Eguberri Gaur,  
Bozkariozko gaur,  
Agitz poztutzen duzu  
Biotzian kristaua. Bis.  
  
Mundu guzia duzu  
Zorionez betetzen,  
Erraiten bai diozu  
Mesias dela sortzen. Bis.

(Oh Christmas eve, night of delight  
Night that rejoices  
The heart of the Christian.  
You fill with happiness  
The whole world  
By announcing  
The Messiah's arrival.)

SIDE II, Band 1. LOVE SONGS. These two love songs "Argizari Ederra" (The Beautiful Moon) and "Neure Maitia" (My Dear) are in the Dorian and Hipocaelian modes respectively. The Basque repertoire is rich in medieval songs and examples of each different mode can be found in this style.

#### ARGIZARI EDERRA

Argizari ederra, argi egidazu,  
Oraino bide luzian yun bearra nuzu.  
Gau ontan bertan nai-tut maitia kausitu;  
Aren bortaraino argi egidazu.

Beautiful moon, light my path,  
I still have much to walk.  
This very night I want to see my beloved;  
Shine on my way till I get to her door.

#### NEURE MAITIA

Neure maitia, ez egon sustoz,  
Biziko gera munduan gustoz.  
Palaziyo bat eginen dizut  
Sekalez edo lastoz.

Don't worry, my dear,  
You and I shall happy live.  
And I will build you a palace  
Made of mud or straw.

SIDE II, Band 2. CLASSICAL DANCES. The Contrapasa and Minuetto in this record are among the most popular. During the 18th and 19th centuries many minuets and contrapas appeared, undoubtedly the result of the classical minuet. Most of this music has come to us from the "txistularis."

SIDE II, Band 3. SPINNING SONG. The songs that allude to everyday work are usually treated by the "bertsolaris" gayly and find an appreciative response in the audience.

#### IRUTEN ARI NUZU

Iruten ari nuzu  
Kilua gerrian.  
Ardura dudalarik  
Nigarra begian.

Arreba, nai duzuya  
Senarrrik erosi?  
Baratze kantoinetan  
Bi sosetan zortzi.

Anaya, nai duzuya  
Emazteik erosi?  
Elizako atetan  
Sosin emezortzi.

I am spinning  
With the wheel on my side.  
And I can't help  
The tears that run  
Down my cheeks.

Sister, are you  
Looking for a husband?  
Go to the street corner  
And there you can buy  
Eight for two pence.

Brother, are you  
Looking for a wife?  
Go do the door of the church  
And you shall find  
eighteen for once pence.

#### SIDE II, Band 4. DANCES FROM ZUBEROA.

1. Sarrera (Introduction)
2. Godalet-dantza (Wine Dance)
3. Ingurukoa (Circle Dance)

This suite of dances is also known as "Masca-  
rade" and although danced today all over  
Euzkadi, they originated in Zuberoa territory  
in the French Department Basses Pyrenees.

The exact origin has not been found, but these  
are considered one of the oldest group of dances  
requiring stylized execution. They influenced  
the art of the ballet.

Very little is known of and it is difficult to in-  
terpret the choreography. These dances were  
finally admitted as part of medieval "Pastorals"  
presented in Zuberoa every spring.

The five interpreters of these dances are  
attired in strange and colorful costumes. The  
most spectacular dance in the group is the  
Godalet-dantza.



