



Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

HAVANA, CUBA, ca. 1957:

RHYTHMS AND SONGS FOR THE ORISHAS

from the historic recordings of

LYDIA CABRERA and **JOSEFINA TARAFÁ**

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Recorded in Havana in 1957, the ritual rhythms and songs collected by Lydia Cabrera and Josefina Tarafa feature the *batá* drums, used by practitioners of Santería to salute and summon the gods (*orishas*). The disc includes a complete cycle of *batá* salutes to the *orishas*, called the *orú de igbodú*, as well as rhythms played during ceremonies to mark the presence of an *orisha*. With origins in Yoruba religion in West Africa, this disc serves as a hub of Afro-Atlantic music, with ties to related religions in New York, Miami, the Caribbean, and Brazil. **28-page booklet, extensive notes, photos, 74 minutes**

ORÚ CANTADO (unaccompanied)

- 1 **Ibarabo Ago Mo Juba**
(Song for Eleguá) 1:22
- 2 **Aganjú Sola**
(Aganjú, high honor or highly honorable one) 1:06
- 3 **Aró** (Song for Yemayá) 1:18
- 4 **Oyá Te Yeye**
(Song for Oyá) 1:25
- 5 **Obatalá/Odúdua** 5:00

ORÚ CANTADO WITH BATÁ DRUMS

- 6 **Ibarabo Ago Mo Juba**
(Song for Eleguá) 2:45
- 7 **Ogúndé Arere** (Ogún arrives, chief of Iré) 2:39
- 8 **Oshosi Ayilodá Mala Mala De**
(Song for Oshosi) 1:43
- 9 **Orishaoko Ogun Fere Weye**
(Song for Orishaoko) 1:54
- 10 **Bá Rí Ibá O Ge De Má**
(Song for Babaluyé) 2:21
- 11 **Aganjú Sola**
(Song for Aganjú) 1:09
- 12 **Oyadé Ibariba Sheke Shé**
(Song for Oyá) 2:23
- 13 **Song for Orunla** 1:56
- 14 **Aró** (Song for Yemayá) 3:49

ORÚ DE IGBODÚ (ORÚ SECO)

- 15 **Eleguá** 2:04
- 16 **Ogún** 1:08
- 17 **Oshosi** 1:31
- 18 **Obaloge** 1:18
- 19 **Inlé** 0:49
- 20 **Orishaoko** 1:05
- 21 **Osain** 0:59
- 22 **Chakpaná**
(Babaluyé) 1:49
- 23 **Ibeyí** 0:36
- 24 **Dadá** 0:50
- 25 **Aganjú** 1:14
- 26 **Shangó** 1:57
- 27 **Obatalá** 1:46
- 28 **Odúdua** 0:57
- 29 **Obá** 1:37
- 30 **Yewá** 1:01
- 31 **Oyá** 2:03
- 32 **Oshún** 0:54
- 33 **Orunla** 0:58
- 34 **Yemayá** 4:38
- 35 **Osain songs** 4:57

GUARACHITAS

- 36 **Guarachita for Shangó** 6:42
- 37 **Guarachita for Shangó** 1:37

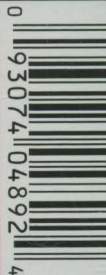


Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

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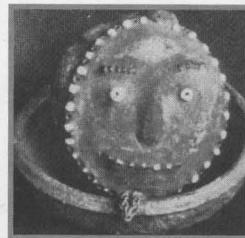
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INTRODUCTION

Lydia Cabrera once said that she had discovered Cuba on the banks of the Seine. She was born in 1900 into a prominent Havana family, her father a writer and publisher who had been active in the Cuban independence movement. She went to Paris in 1927 to study painting. Taking up residence in Montmartre, near the painter Utrillo's studio, she enrolled at the École des Beaux Arts. Besides her painting, Cabrera began to study the art and religions of India and Japan, whose myths she later said reawakened her interest in Afro-Cuban subjects. They reminded her of the stories she had heard from Black servants in her childhood. Cabrera lived in Europe until 1938, and during those eleven years she traveled extensively on the continent and made several trips back to Cuba. On a visit to Havana in 1928, Cabrera felt a strong need to establish contact with the Afro-Cuban community. It was during this visit that she befriended Omi-Tomí and other elders who would figure prominently in the pages of *El monte*, her masterwork of Afro-Cuban ethnography, first published in 1954 (Cabrera 1983).



La Quinta San José, Marianao, Havana, in the 1950s

Cabrera's interest in Afro-Cuban subjects was probably also stimulated by the cultural currents of Paris in the 1920s. Interest in *négritude* was very strong, and African art had been in vogue since the days of the Cubists during the previous decade. In 1927, the year that Cabrera arrived in France, Josephine Baker was the highest-paid entertainer in Europe. This heady period incubated Cabrera's first published work, *Cuentos Negros de Cuba* (Black Tales of Cuba). Cabrera had originally written these stories for Teresa de la Parra, a Venezuelan novelist, while de la Parra was convalescing in a Swiss sanitarium, where the two lived from 1932 to 1934 (shades of Thomas Mann and *The Magic Mountain*). The stories were first published in 1936 by Gallimard in a French translation. In 1938, with warclouds gathering in Europe, Cabrera returned to Havana. In 1940, she and Maria Teresa de Rojas began to restore an abandoned 18th-century mansion, la Quinta San José, owned by Rojas. They hoped to turn it into a museum that would document the evolution of the Cuban colonial house, and they filled it with antique furniture and art. It was in

Marianao, on the edge of the mostly Black Pogolotti district, which Cabrera had often visited on previous trips to Havana, and which she continued to frequent. In 1942, she traveled to other parts of Cuba, continuing her studies of Afro-Cuban religions and folklore, which ultimately focused on the Havana area and Matanzas. This was the beginning of the years of research that culminated in her masterwork, *El monte*.

Cabrera and Rojas were still living at the Quinta San José when these recordings were made in the late 1950s. With Josefina Tarafa, a photographer who often accompanied Cabrera in her research and who took many of the photos that appear in *El monte*, she set out to record Afro-Cuban ritual music. In her prodigious investigations of Afro-Cuban traditions, Lydia Cabrera never used a tape recorder. She relied instead on her phenomenal memory and on index cards. Her contributions as a musicologist are perhaps the least known part of her output, and the recordings she and Tarafa made are often not cited in her bibliographies. It may have been her friend's fascination with technology

that persuaded Cabrera to venture into this kind of research. With Tarafa's portable Ampex tape recorder and the help of two sound engineers who later transferred the tapes to discs, the team managed to record a set of fourteen LPs, *Música de los cultos africanos en Cuba* (Music of the African Cults in Cuba). Some of the music was recorded in Havana, but most of it was collected in rural and semirural areas of Matanzas, where Tarafa's family owned a sugar mill (*central*) which became the base of operations for the team's research. In a book first published in Spain, Cabrera's text and Tarafa's photographs document their fieldwork in Matanzas in the 1950s (Cabrera 1973).

In Matanzas, Cabrera and Tarafa focused on rural Lukumí music as performed by priests (*olorishas*) in farmland (*ará oko*), many of whom were descendants of the Yoruba slaves who had worked at the local sugar mills, but they also collected Arará (Dahomean) and Kongo material. Their recordings open new horizons in the study of rural Afro-Cuban culture, and give glimpses of late 19th-century life in the slave quarters (*barracones*). Much of this music is in an old *bembé*



Lukumí priestess, Matanzas, with offering of young goat wearing alá, a ritual jacket

lukumi style, unfamiliar even to those well versed in Afro-Cuban drumming, but powerfully illustrated by the master drumming in the song that accompanies an offering for Oshún at the *iroko* tree (SFW CD 40490, "Yeyé," track 21).

If the music on this CD sounds more familiar, it may be because it is the *parent* style of what is now heard outside of Cuba in the *orisha* worship of San Juan, Miami, and New York, and on the U.S. west coast. Havana *batá* drumming has been analyzed in *The Music of Santería* (Amira and Cornelius 1999). It is also the song and drum style analyzed in detail decades ago by Fernando Ortiz. Cabrera's contemporary and her brother-in-law. Many of the rhythms in the *orí de ígbodú* cycle, recorded by Cabrera and heard in its entirety on SFW CD 40489, can be found transcribed in two of Ortiz's works (Ortiz 1998; Ortiz 1981).

This music can serve as a soundtrack to portions of Cabrera's own writings. A case in point are the songs to Osain, *orisha* of medicinal and liturgical plants, heard on track 35 of this recording. A passage in *El monte* details the setting for these songs, which accompany the preparation of the *omiero*, the sacred water, used to "wash and to make *santo*," to purify the neophytes (*iyawós*), during the first days of their ordination into Santería:

"Sometimes the *iyaré* (principal godmother) and *oyibona* (second godmother or the godfather) leave the room as the *santeras* begin simultaneously to tear up the plants and squeeze the juice from their leaves. As they

proceed, a person called the *oriaté* begins the songs that accompany this rite, and the *santeras* answer in chorus. There are sixteen, seventeen, or twenty-one prayers for Osain; that is, with these songs and prayers, the *santeras* make *orí* or summon the *orishas*" (Cabrera 1983:107).

The fourth song in the Osain series ("*Osain güere güeni to bleo*") also connects Cabrera to the work of two important researchers in her generation: Harold Courlander and Melville Herskovits. Calling it a "Lukumi song," Courlander had collected the same melody near Havana in 1940, and it appears on his Folkways record *Cult Music of Cuba* (F-4410, track 2). In Courlander's notes to his recordings (1951), he recognized its similarity to a Brazilian song. One can sense his excitement here, as field recordings began to reveal the outlines of the interconnectedness and transnational nature of Yoruba diasporic music: "Probably one of the most interesting points in connection with this ['Lukumi song'] is that almost the identical melody was recorded by Dr. Melville J. and Frances Herskovits in [Bahia,] Brazil [in the early 1940s]. The Brazilian variant, from the repertoire of one of the Yoruba cults, is somewhat richer in its form and presentation, but the identity of the two songs is immediately apparent" (Courlander 1951).

Besides echoing Courlander's research in Havana and Herskovits's in Brazil, a song recorded by Cabrera and Tarafa in Matanzas suggests another link in the Yoruba diaspora, this time between Cuba and Trinidad. In the late 1930s and at the opposite end of the Caribbean,

Herskovits had found in the Trinidadian village of Toco a "Yariba" song, Oshún Talade ("Oshún is worthy of queenship"), which was being sung simultaneously in Matanzas, Cuba. The song may have come with the Yoruba who were arriving on both islands at around the same time, in the mid 1800s. They had come while slavery was still in force, but in Trinidad they kept arriving as indentured workers after slavery had ended there in 1838. The formats of the song differ, but the melodies are identical. Both versions appear on the CD *The Yoruba/Dahomean Collection: Orishas across the Ocean* (Rykodisc RCD 10405), as "Ochún Talade," (track 15), and "Yariba-Oshun," (track 21).

The Cabrera-Tarafa recordings can thus serve as a hub of Afro-Atlantic music, connecting Cuba not only to New York and Trinidad, but to Bahia, Brazil. Awareness that branches of the Yoruba diaspora have musical links goes back to the early 1940s or before. Recent musical experiments have made the Cuba-Bahia connection even more explicit. A recent CD, *Bata Ketu: A Musical Interplay of Cuba and Brazil* (Bembé CD 2011-2), brings together the musics of Havana-style *orisha* worship and Brazilian *Candomblé*, even within the same song. Using

the same melody and text, singers and percussionists shift seamlessly between Cuban and Brazilian performance styles, as in the song for Eleguá/Exú (track 2.1-2.3).

The Osain song collected by Cabrera and Courlander in Cuba and by Herskovits in Brazil is also performed by Bata Ketu, who place the melody and Cuban and Brazilian singers over a contemporary samba-reggae rhythm ("Kuru Kuru Reggae" tracks 3.2, 3.5). The intuition Courlander had in 1951 thus comes to life for contemporary audiences through a musical experiment, largely made possible by advances in recording technology—the same technology that has given new life to, and restored the sound of, recordings collected almost fifty years ago by Lydia Cabrera and Josefina Tarafa, recordings that give a glimpse of Afro-Cuban culture in Havana and the Matanzas countryside a few years before Fidel Castro came to

power. In 1960, Lydia Cabrera and Maria Teresa de Rojas settled in Miami. That same year, the Quinta San José was destroyed by fire. In 1970, Cabrera started a new writing career, and published extensively well into her 80s. Lydia Cabrera died in Miami in 1991.



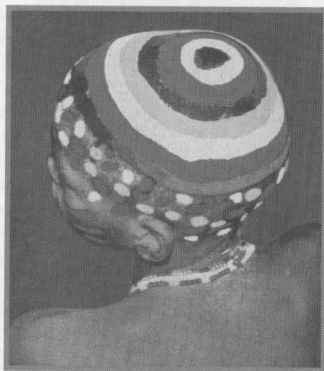
Herbalist, Havana.

HAVANA, 1957

Fernando Ortiz estimated that of the more than one hundred African ethnic groups present in Cuba in the 19th century, fourteen distinct "nations" had by 1900 preserved their identities in *cabildos*, religious brotherhoods under the sponsorship of the Roman Catholic Church. An urban phenomenon, *cabildos* became mutual-aid associations and social clubs of free and enslaved Blacks from the same African "nation," which later included their Cuban-born descendants.

Even after they were officially disbanded at the end of the 19th century, many *cabildos* survived unofficially, known popularly by their old African names. Among the earliest Lukumí *cabildos* in Havana was Shangó-Tedún, founded in the early 19th century. Two other 19th-century *cabildos* with the same name are known to have been in Havana, and the last was organized in Marianao around 1900 (Ramos 2000). Calazán, an elderly Lukumí who figures prominently in the pages of *El monte*, claimed that his father, Tá Román, was a founder of one of these societies. His African

name was Prince Latikuá Achiku Latikú. When these recordings were made, Cabrera says that a "pale shadow" of a *cabildo* dedicated to Santa Bárbara (Shangó) could still be found in the Pogolotti section of Marianao (Cabrera 1983:24-25).



Neophyte (iyawó), with head painted for ordination into *regla de ocha*. Photo by J. de Dobrony

It was within the *cabildos* that Cuban Yoruba religion and identity coalesced, and it was from them that urban *regla de ocha*, popularly known as *Santería*, would emerge. By grouping together the worship of many *orishas*, *regla de ocha* was the Lukumí response to the disruption in Cuba of the lineages and kin groups that had formed the underpinning of Yoruba religion in West Africa. From ethnically based *cabildos* of colonial Cuba, the religion became organized into individual "houses" (*casas de ocha*). It has since spread far beyond its original

base, both inside and outside of Cuba.

Entry into *regla de ocha* is through a long process of initiation, during which an *orisha* is "seated in the head" of an initiate (*iyawó*). As in Candomblé, Vodun, Shango, and other African-based religions in the Americas,

music plays a crucial role in bringing the *orishas*, who come down to possess and dance in the head of their "children." In Nigeria, specific drum types are associated with the worship of particular *orishas*: *batá* drums for Shangó, Oyá, and the Egungun, ancestral spirits who appear in masquerade form; *igbin* drums for Obatalá; *agere* drums for Ogún and Oshosi; and *Olokun* drums for the *orisha* of the same name.

Several of these drum families have survived in Cuba, but the most important Lukumí ritual drums are *batá*, a trio heard extensively on this CD. The predominance of *batá* drums in Havana and the preeminence of their owner, Shangó (*Changó* in the Cuban spelling), are indicative of the influence of Oyo Yoruba culture in the Cuban capital. This influence may also be seen in the ordination ceremony into *regla de ocha*, sometimes called *coronar el santo*, "crowning the saint," comparable to a coronation and with some of the trappings of the Oyo royal court (Ramos 2000). In fact, Oyo culture has influenced many aspects of initiation into *regla de ocha*, such as the use of the thunder pedestal (*odo shango*), an inverted

mortar, which in Shangó's Nigerian shrines, often supports a plate of thunderstones and is where initiates sit while their heads are being shaved. It has the same use in Cuba for initiates of Shangó, Yemayá, Oyá, and other *orishas*. In Cuba, Shangó's mortar (*pilón*) has a waisted shape, similar to that of *batá* drums and his other attributes.

The *batá* are played for all the *orishas* in ceremonies (*wemilere*), which are divided into four parts: the *orí de igbodu* or *orí seco* (dry *orí*), the *orí cantado* (sung *orí*) or *orí de eyá arañla* (great-hall *orí*), the *ibán baló* (patio), and the *cierra* (close). In the first part, the *batá* drums play the sequence of rhythms (*orí*) in the sacred chamber (*igbodú*), without vocal accompaniment. The sung *orí* is performed in the great hall (*eyá arañla*); hence its other name, *orí de eyá arañla* (ceremony of the living room). During this

section, initiates come forward to dance for their *orisha*. The patio phase then follows, its flow controlled by the lead singer (*akpwón*). This is when possession by the *orishas* usually occurs. The last section is comprised of a sequence of rhythms dedicated to the ancestral spirits (*egun*), followed by songs to Eleguá and Olokun.



Shangó with his *batá* drum

The final salute (*achedima to iban Echú*), played by solo *batá*, effectively closes the ceremonies (Amira and Cornelius 1999; Emilio Barreto, personal communication).

These ceremonial parts mark the compression of Nigerian Yoruba village space into a Cuban *casa de ocha*: the *igbodú* corresponds to the West African sacred grove; the *eyá aranla*, to the inner courtyard of a Nigerian compound or town square, where communal festivals and rituals take place; and the *ibán baló*, to the garden where liturgical and medicinal plants are grown (Mason 1992:23). Other correspondences, associated with specific *orishas*, include the door or town gate, guarded by Eleguá, Ogún, and Oshosi. Similar spatial compressions have been noted in Salvador, Brazil, where *Candomblé* temples (*terreiros*) have been called "Africas in miniature."

The following sequences do not follow the ritual order of the ceremonies outlined above, but are presented so a listener can hear several songs as melody alone and as rhythm alone, and can then discover how they are combined in *orú cantado*. An example is the song for Eleguá (track 6), whose *latokpá* rhythm is played on solo *batá* (track 15), and whose unaccompanied melody constitutes track 1. The rhythms played solo in the *orú de igbodú* may not always be the same as those that accompany songs for the same *orisha* in the *orú cantado*. The Dadá rhythm (track 24), for example,

accompanies the song for Orishaoko (track 9), and the Ogué rhythm underlies the song for Oshosi (track 8); this is not Oshosi's salute, the *aguere*, heard in the *orú seco* (track 17).

THE MUSIC

ORÚ CANTADO (unaccompanied)

Performed by Cándido Martínez and group

These songs are part of a longer sequence, and may have been meant to serve as a demonstration of an unaccompanied song cycle for the purposes of this recording. However, songs without *batá* accompaniment are also performed when the use of drums is not feasible, sometimes for financial reasons, and an unaccompanied *orú cantado* might be performed at a "birthday" marking an initiation, or in a *medio* ceremony, a stage in the initiation process. Singing without drums also occurs in private ceremonies, such as during the rituals and sacrifices following ordinations or other events. Possession occurs frequently without drumming (Willie Ramos, personal communication).

Unaccompanied singing reveals the sometimes intricate relationship between the song leader (*akpwón*), and the chorus (*ankorí*), including the frequent overlaps of their parts. The song texts include many praise names and sections from *patakin*, stories that relate the *orishas'* exploits. The songs for Obatalá (track 5) are a good example of a *tratado* or *secuencia*, a series of songs strung together at the song leader's discretion to suit the ritual setting.

1. Ibarabo Ago Mo Juba (Song for Eleguá)

This is one of the best-known Lukumí melodies, found throughout the Yoruba diaspora. The opening line includes the praise name [Eshú] Layiki, a road or avatar of Eleguá. In this aspect, he is described as "a road no one knows how to begin or to end" (Castellanos and Castellanos 1992:30). The second section, beginning *choncho abe ko lori eyó*, refers to a pointed knife, iconographically a blade protruding from Eleguá's head (Verger 1981). This is also a reference to Eleguá's double-edged nature, his ability to make or break someone.

2. Aganjú Sola (Aganjú, high honor or highly honorable one)

The *orisha* of volcanoes and the wilderness is considered in Cuba to be father of Shangó, and is syncretized with Saint Christopher, patron of Havana, whose colonial cathedral bears the saint's name. In Cuba, Aganjú is the *orisha* of porters, stevedores, and boatmen. This function may account for his association with Saint Christopher, whose chromolithograph shows him bearing the infant Jesus on his shoulders.

3. Aró (Song for Yemayá)

Aró ("blue indigo dye") is a reference to Yemayá as dyer (one of her roads is Ibú Aró—"deep place of indigo dye"), and owner of the sea. A pot of blue dye is kept on Ibú Aró's shrine. This *rezo*, literally "prayer," is a praise poem (*oriki*) for the "mother of the children of fishes."

4. *Oyá Te Yeye* (Song for Oyá)

This song's refrain, *Oyá te yeye* ("hold back" or "calm down") refers to Oyá's manifestation in powerful wind-storms: "When Shango wishes to fight with lightning, he sends his wife ahead of him to fight with wind. Without her, Shango cannot fight, and when Oyá comes, people know that he is not far behind" (Bascom 1969:87).

5. *Obatalá/Odúdua*

This song sequence begins with an Arará song for Oñoré, whom the Lukumí recognize as a Dahomean road of Obatalá. The song mentions Naná Buruku, mother of Babaluaíyé and ancestress of the Yoruba *orishas* who entered the pantheon of the Fon people of Dahomey. It then moves into *Baba, Alaye o* ("Father, owner of the world"), a prayer for Obatalá. The next part of the sequence is *Okú ó Agoloná* ("I salute you road, grant permission"), a well-known song for Odúdua, whom some Cubans consider to be the oldest Obatalá. The last section of the sequence, called *Elerí Efá*, refers to a mythical battle in which Obatalá chops off his enemies' heads. It is sung to incite possession, telling the *orisha* to "take over that head, too!"

ORÚ CANTADO WITH BATÁ DRUMS

Performed by Cándido Martínez and Antonio Alberiche, song leaders, and chorus and batá trio led by Miguel Santa Cruz and Juan González.

6. *Ibarabo Ago Mo Juba* (Song for Eleguá)

This song is an excellent illustration of an insight that folklorist Edison Carneiro had about Afro-Brazilian religious music: that the autonomy of a sung melody in relation to an accompanying percussion orchestra is essentially African (Carneiro 1964). This feature also characterizes many other forms of Afro-Atlantic ritual music, including Lukumí. A good example of this autonomy is heard here, in the movement of the melody heard on track 1 over the self-contained interplay within the *batá* trio, playing the *latokpá* rhythm that opens the *orú seco* below (track 15). The resultant song-with-drums is a startlingly new creation. Wearing a straw hat, Eleguá dances with his hooked club (*gara-bato*) over his left shoulder, with most of his weight on his left foot. He moves backward and side to side, often with spinning movements.

7. *Ogúndé Arere* (Ogún arrives, chief of Iré)

One of Ogún's roads in Cuba is Ogún Arere, a warrior and king or chief of Iré, one of the cities he conquered. Ogún dances with a machete (*adá*), and his movements mime his roads as warrior (brandishing his machete as a weapon) cultivator (clearing away underbrush), and smith (hammering iron). As a farmer, he dances by crouching and moving forward on one foot, keeping the

other one behind him, as someone clearing the underbrush might do to avoid being accidentally cut by the machete (Ortiz 1981).

8. *Oshosi Ayilodá Mala Mala De* (Song for Oshosi)

Ketu, the capital of the Yoruba kingdom Ketu, which sat astride the present-day boundary between Nigeria and Benin (Dahomey), was the seat of Oshosi worship in West Africa. The sack of this city by the King of Dahomey sent many of Oshosi's priests into slavery in the Americas. As a result, this *orisha* is today much more honored in Salvador, Brazil, and Cuba than in his home territory (Verger 1981). Oshosi's drum salute in both countries is called *aguere*. A warrior/hunter, his symbol is the bow and arrow (*adó adofá*), and not surprisingly, his dance pantomimes the hunt (Emilio Barreto, personal communication). Ortiz notes that in Cuban *casas de secha*, if a bow and arrow were not available, the dancer would place the index finger of his or her right hand over the index finger of the left hand, symbolizing the hunt (Ortiz 1981). In this song, the *batá* drums are playing the Ogué rhythm.

9. *Orishaoko Ogun Fere Weye* (Song for Orishaoko)

Cabrera notes that Orishaoko was more venerated in Matanzas than in Havana, and this is not surprising, considering that he is the *orisha* of crops and fertility. His worship is believed to have been brought to Matanzas from Nigeria in the 19th century by the priestess María Luisa, known as Ma'guisa, and from

Matanzas it was taken to Havana in the 20th century by Octavio Samá, known as Obadimeji (Miguel Ramos, personal communication). In West Africa, Orishaoko's "children" are usually women, but in Cuba they may be of either gender. This *orisha* no longer comes down to possess worshipers, and therefore has no mimetic dance. The *batá* drums are playing the Dadá rhythm here.

10. *Bá Rí Ibá O Ge De Má* (Song for Babaluaíyé)

This song fades in over the second section of the *batá* rhythm for Babaluaíyé, the smallpox *orisha*, heard below in the *orú seco* (track 23). Inadvertently, Fernando Ortiz sometimes supplied a gloss to a song collected by Cabrera: "While [the song *bá rí ibá o ge de má*] is sung, water is spilled on the ground and all those present wet their fingers in it, passing them over their foreheads and the backs of their heads, and then kissing their hand. Like the sign of the cross, it is a gesture meant to ward off disease and illness" (Ortiz 1998:219). When Babalú dances, he holds a broom (*ja*), which he uses to keep flies away from his wounds, or to clear away evil.

11. *Aganjú sola* (Song for Aganjú)

This song is always the first in a song sequence for this *orisha* (Emilio Barreto, personal communication). His dance is awkward, consisting of big steps, as though he were stepping over obstacles, or perhaps rivers and mountains. When Aganjú has possessed a worshiper, he will carry anyone present, especially big people, lifting them as if they were weightless in a demonstration of his might.

12. Oyádé Ibariba sheke shé (Song for Oyá)

Oyádé, Ibariba sheke shé.

Oyádé, Ibariba sheke shé.

Ago ilé; agó lona. / Oya silé ó Oyá. / Oyádé.

Oyá arrives. The pods of the royal poinciana tree shake to salute her. (2x)

Earth, grant permission; road, grant permission (i.e. get out of her way). / Oyá has come home (or to the earth). / Oyá arrives.

[Pods of the royal poinciana (*Delonix regia*) are used as Oyá's calling instrument.]

Oyá dances with a machete in her left hand and a black fly whisk (*irukere*) in her right, which she shakes to imitate the whirlwind. "While her dance is [sometimes] frenetic, her song is solemn, like a reflexive invocation of justice" (Ortiz 1981). The *batá* are playing the *Obá* rhythm.

13. Song for Orunla

Orunla is the oracle, whose priests are the *babalawos* ("fathers of the mystery"), keepers of the Ifa system of divination. Orunla does not "come down" in ceremonies, but a dance in his honor is performed by daughters of Oshún, who according to Ifa was once married to Orunla. These dancers represent Orunla's favorite wives (*apétebi*).

14. Aró (Song for Yemayá)

This is another example of how a slow-moving melody can be joined to an energetic *batá* rhythm. Yemayá's dance includes wavelike movements, with some turning in imitation of the whirlpool. The acceleration of the rhythm alludes to the rapidity with which a calm sea can become a turbulent and destructive force, in direct opposition to its generally life-generating nature. Another version of this song, as it might be performed in a New York City ceremony, was recently recorded by song leader Emilio Barreto and drummer Orlando "Puntilla" Rios on the CD *Santisimo* (LUZ 0001CD, Luz Productions, NY).

ORÚ DE IGBODÚ (ORÚ SECO)

Performed by Miguel Santa Cruz, Gustavo Diaz, and Juan González

Like the *xiré* of Brazilian *Candomblé*, which also groups together the worship of many *orishas*, the *orú seco* consists of a sequence of drum salutes to usually twenty-two separate deities. These rhythms follow no fixed order, but they always obey certain rules, such as beginning with salutes (*toques*) for the warriors (Elegúa, Ogún, and Oshosi), and ending with the rhythm for the *orisha* being honored in that ceremony, followed by the salute for *Odúdua*. Otherwise, there is some latitude in the sequencing. A typical *orú*, such as the one found here, may begin with the male *orishas* and end with the female ones. This one opens with a grouping of warriors and hunters, and leads into a series of female water *orishas*, representing rivers and the sea. The rhythm for Orunla, the oracle, appears next to the one for Oshún for reasons described below.

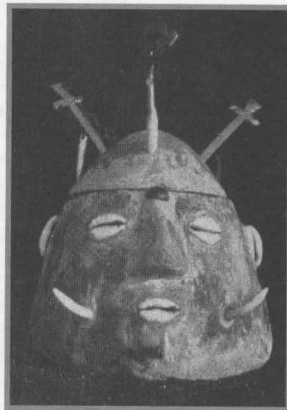
The *batá* orchestra consists of a master drum (*iyá*, "mother"), a middle support drum (*itótele*), and a small support drum (*okónkolo*). Strands of brass bells

(*chaworó*) are strung around the heads of the master drum. The interplay among the trio in each of these drum salutes is highly structured. Each salute consists of four main elements: roads, calls (*llames*), conversations, and variations. The road is the largest structural element. Each salute can contain anywhere from one to

six or more roads, each one representing an avatar of the *orisha* to whom the salute is dedicated. Within each road, the master drum "calls" and initiates the salute rhythm to be played; it moves the ensemble from one road to another, and it initiates "conversations" between itself and the middle support drum (Amira and Cornelius 1999; Ortiz 1998).

15. Eleguá

As the threshold and crossroads *orisha*, Legba/Exú/Eleguá is always honored first in ceremonies throughout the Dahomean and Yoruba-influenced areas of the Americas, and every *orú* and *xiré* will always open with him. This salute, called *latokpá*, consists of five roads (Louis Bauzó, personal communication).



Eleguá and the warriors, Ogún and Oshosi, sculpted in concrete

16. Ogún

This salute is a good example of the sonic symbolism of the *batá* ensemble, which, at one level, is a representation of the *orisha*'s roads. Here, the first road is marked by staccato slaps, which some interpret as a martial rhythm or the sound of Ogún hammering iron at his forge (Amira and Cornelius 1999).

17. Oshosi

This is the *aguere* rhythm mentioned in the note to track 8, the same name given to Oshosi's salute in Brazilian *Candomblé*. In Cuba, the final section of the *aguere* accelerates in tempo until the master drum closes it. Oshosi is the brother of Ogún, and his bow and arrow are frequently shown among Ogún's iron tools.

18. Obaloge

An obscure hunter *orisha*, said to be Oshosi's brother, Obaloge is still honored in the *orí seco*. Besides this rhythm, there are also songs for Obaloge.

19. Inlé

This is the Brazilian, Trinidadian, and Cuban name for Erinlé, which in Yoruba means "elephant-in-the-earth," or "land-elephant." A hunter, Inlé is also the *orisha* of a small river near Ilobu, a southwestern Nigerian trading town, of which he is the patron. In Cuba, he combines several elements: he is considered the physician of the Lukumí pantheon, a healer with a knowledge of herbalism, and he is aquatic, a fisherman who hunts in the water.

"In Havana in the last years of the 19th century, 'Inlé

hardly ever came to anyone's head.' A woman in her sixties tells me that once she had gone to Palenque (in the Marianao district where many Lukumis lived), and that Inlé had come down. All the saints came to pay homage, and all the Lukumí elders wept with emotion. Since then, the old lady adds, 'Inlé hasn't been seen in anyone's head'" (Cabrera 1983:59).

20. Orishaoko

This salute for Orishaoko has an especially intricate structure, as can be seen in Ortiz's transcription (Ortiz 1998:60) and Amira and Cornelius's analysis (p. 42). According to Ortiz, the last song leader to know the associated song was Miguel Ayai, who died about 1940 and may be the Miguel Ayai mentioned in *El monte*. According to Cabrera, his nickname was "El Lukumí," and he was said to have a good command of Akú, the language and name by which the Yoruba were known in Sierra Leone. He may have been descended from the Akú Yoruba who were among the thousands of free Africans who went to Trinidad and elsewhere in the Caribbean during the years 1841–1867 (Warner-Lewis 1991) and may then have come to Cuba.

21. Osain

This is played for the owner of *ewe*, the liturgical and medicinal plants that are fundamental for *orisha* worship. The rhythm is called *kuru kuru be te*.

22. Chakpaná (Babaluaiyé)

The roads or sections of this salute are in three parts: *iyá nko ota*, *bá ribá o ge de má*, and *Yewá*. The song for Babaluaiyé, heard above in the *orí cantado* (track 10),

fades in on the second road. The *Yewá* rhythm, which follows it, accompanies all of Babaluaiyé's Arará or Dahomean songs in Cuba (John Amira, personal communication).

Since the *batá* drums have preserved the outline of the speech melodies of Yoruba, a tonal language, they can be said to speak in the same way as other talking drums. *Iyá nko ota* and *ba ribá o ge de má* are song-specific rhythms and spoken phrases reproduced by the drum's melodies (Emilio Barreto and Louis Bauzó, personal communication).

23. Ibeji

This and the following three salutes can be considered a subgrouping within the *orí de ígbodú*, dedicated to Shangó and his family. The *ibeyi* are twins, the children of Shangó and Oshún or Oyá. This salute is pure drum language between the master and middle drums, with the smallest support drum providing a rhythmic foundation. The drum text refers to the twins' playfulness. The *ibeyi* do not possess initiates, but twins present at a ceremony, even if they are not initiated, are saluted by the drummers, who must give them money. They are the only noninitiates permitted to dance in front of the *batá* drums. They dance with their hands extended, as if asking for alms.

24. Dadá

According to Pierre Verger, Dadá was Shangó's brother and a king of Oyó. Dethroned by Shangó, he returned to power seven years later (Verger 1981). In Cuba, Dadá is either brother or sister of Shangó, and is the *orisha* of

young children, especially those born with matted or curly hair. He does not come to the head of initiates in Cuba, and there are few songs associated with him. An extremely rare song for Dadá from Matanzas can be heard on track 19 of the companion volume to this CD, *Matanzas, Cuba, ca. 1957: Afro-Cuban Sacred Music from the Countryside* (SFW CD 40490). His Brazilian *Candomblé* rhythm, part of the *Roda de Dadá*, can be heard on the CD *The Yoruba/Dahomean Collection: Orishas across the Ocean* (Rykodisc RCD 10405).

25. Aganjú

As part of the Lukumí creation myth, Aganjú is the creative flame that set the earth on fire and then became the sun (Castellanos and Castellanos 1992:60). In Cuba, this *orisha* is usually seen as the father of Shangó, whose mother is Yemayá. In Lukumí initiations, Aganjú is generally received together with Shangó.

26. Shangó

Shangó was a king of the Oyo Yoruba, and his cult "was an institutionalized state religion throughout the [Oyo] Empire" (Warner-Lewis 1991). His people, many of whom became captives in wars with the Fulani, were prominently represented in the Yoruba diaspora, and in some parts of the Americas his name has come to epitomize *orisha* worship, whether as *Shango* in Trinidad and Grenada, or as *Xangô* in Recife, Brazil. In Cuba as in Nigeria, Shangó is owner of the *batá* drums, and they often appear as artifacts in his shrines, either in fullscale, where they hang from the top of the shrine, or in miniature. Not surprisingly, he has a wealth of *batá*

rhythms. Heard here are *ewi pami* and *titi lá ro*, the two roads of this salute (Louis Bauzó, personal communication).

27. Obatalá

The oldest and most important *orisha*, Obatalá was the first to be created by Olodumare. Obatalá shaped the human body. He is also the *orisha* of purity and of peace. The word *Obatalá* means "King of the White Cloth." In a multileveled pun, Cabrera refers to Obatalá as *un paño de lágrimas*, an idiom that can be loosely translated as "a shoulder to cry on." Literally, it denotes a (white) cotton handkerchief that wipes away tears. Cotton is one of the most important plants associated with Obatalá. The first part of this salute for him is *He, He Hékua, o*, and the last part is *O ti ka mbó*. This is exactly as Ortiz described it (Ortiz 1998:219).

28. Odúdua

In Nigeria, Odúdua is partly an historical figure, the first king of Ife, and the progenitor of all the Yoruba. On both sides of the Atlantic, he is closely related to Obatalá. In Nigeria, he is creator of the earth, and Obatalá the creator of mankind; in Cuba, Odúdua is sometimes seen as a road of Obatalá, but mostly as a separate *orisha*. His salute normally closes the *orí de igbodú*, but is here placed next to Obatalá's.

29. Obá

Obá is the *orisha* of the Nigerian river that bears her name. Her riverine aspect is remembered in Cuba, where rituals for her are mostly performed on a riverbank. The legitimate wife of Shangó, she was anxious to

keep her husband by her side, and was tricked into cutting off one of her ears to serve to her husband in one of his favorite dishes. Obá does not come down in Cuba, but she does so in Brazilian *Candomblé*, and when she possesses a worshiper, a turban is tied around her head to cover her mutilated ear. Obá has warrior aspects, and one of her symbols is a sword, which identifies her with Shangó. Like Ogún, she is said to work at a forge, and this aspect is symbolized by an anvil. Other attributes include a ship's rudder and a compass, because she is a sailor and because of her association with death (the rudder and compass allude to the voyage to the other side); an ear, which echoes the legend mentioned above; a cart, also symbolizing death; and a key, for opening the doors of the home to good luck and prosperity (Castellanos and Castellanos 1992:49).

30. Yewá

In Nigeria, Yewá is *orisha* of a river that runs parallel to Yemayá's Ògùn River. In Cuba, Yewá is the "chaste saint," a virgin who avoids the company of men. Tempted to sin with Shangó, she asked her father, Obatalá, to banish her to a desolate place. He agreed, and she went to live at the entrance to Ilé-Ikú, the cemetery, where she receives the dead. Yewá no longer dances at ceremonies in the United States, but she continues to possess worshipers in Matanzas, Cuba (Willie Ramos, personal communication).

31. Oyá

Orisha of the Niger River, Oyá in Cuba is considered the second wife of Shangó, Obá being his first and princi-



Cabildo procession with batá drums, in Regla, near Havana

pal wife. Closely allied to Shangó, she manifests as the strong wind that precedes a thunderstorm, and is associated with whirlwinds. The two salutes for Oyá heard here are *Bayuba kante* and *Oyábikú*, separated by a short break. The latter name comes from the phrase *Oyá bí ikú: Oyá parió a la muerte*, meaning that she gave birth to death. In Cuba, Oyá is owner of the cemetery.

32. Oshún

In the Ijesha region of southwestern Nigeria, the river that bears Oshún's name flows past Oshogbo, where her principal shrine is located. In Cuba, she is the *orisha* of freshwater. In Cuba as in Nigeria, she is light-skinned; Cabrera calls her the Lukumí Venus and the *mulata* saint. Syncretized with La Caridad del Cobre, she is the patron of Cuba. This *batá* rhythm is called *chenché kururú*, and Ortiz says it is danced "con salsa y sandunga," with suggestive movements (Ortiz 1981).

33. Orunla

The divination *orisha* married Oshún as a reward for having saved his life by rescuing him from a well. It is because of this marriage that Oshún's "daughters" are authorized to aid the *babalawos* in their work, and to dance in Orunla's honor. They are the *apétebi* par excellence. In the *orí*, his salute is placed next to that of Oshún.

34. Yemayá

Orisha of the Ògùn River in Nigeria, she in Cuba is the *orisha* of the top layer of the ocean, and is associated with other bodies of water and natural phenomena,

including reefs, springs, and ocean foam. This rhythm, called *aró* (indigo blue) (see note to track 12), is the representation in sound of the change from a calm to a turbulent sea, and its placement at the end of the *orí* means that this ceremony was held in Yemayá's honor.

35. Osain songs

Performed by Cándido Martínez and group

The sacred water (*omiero*) includes elements of plants belonging to many *orishas*, each of them owner of certain *ewe*, leaves, that contain an active element (*ashé*), which corresponds to the attributes of their *orisha* owners (Marks 1988). At the end of the songs, the ceremony leader (*oriaté*) says "A se Omo Osain," which means, "We make the child of Osain," and the chorus answers, "Ewe ayé" ("Leaves of the world").

This series of songs for Osain opens with the following lines:

*Oyiki (oñiqui) 'yiki ota l'omí ó.
Oyiki 'yiki ota l'omí.*

Oyiki iyá kó ku ma. // Oyiki 'yiki ota l'omí ó

The mighty immovable stone [is] in the water.
The mighty immovable stone [is] in the water.
Mother is eternal; she dies no more.
The mighty immovable stone [is] in the water.

Osain is called *òyigí yigí* (everlasting) and *ota omi* (a stone in water), an image of eternity (Warner-Lewis 1991). This song is about the immortality of the soul, but it also has historical dimensions. In Cuba, some versions of it mention Egbado, and people say this vari-

ation alludes to the Oyo Yoruba's finding refuge there during the collapse of their empire. It may also refer to the founding of the city of Abeokuta, in Egba Yoruba territory. The latter interpretation makes more sense, since, though the chant continues to mention Egbado, the name *Abeokuta*, which was founded in 1830 by refugees from the internal Yoruba wars, can be translated as "under the big stone" (Willie Ramos, personal communication). This is a reference to the Olumo Rock, a massive outcrop of granite that stands above the city, in whose surrounding caves the Egba found refuge during attacks by the king of Dahomey and other Yoruba.

GUARACHITAS

Performed by Miguel Santa Cruz, Gustavo Díaz, and Juan González

The *guarachitas* are *batá* rhythms played to mark the presence of an *orisha* during a ceremony and to enliven the atmosphere. A showcase for the drummers, they are played to please the *orisha* associated with each rhythm, and to bring on more possessions among attendees (Emilio Barreto, personal communication). During a ceremony, the *orishas* may request that certain rhythms be played for them, thus giving the drummers a chance to perform rarely heard salutes. The drummers here play extended versions of salutes for Shangó, owner of the *batá* drums. Shangó's dances are energetic, some erotic and others warlike. He brandishes his thunder axe, throws thunderbolts, and performs somersaults.

36. Guarachita for Shangó

These rhythms are called *bayuba* and *meta* (John Amira, personal communication).

37. Guarachita for Shangó

This is an old style of playing *oferere*, another of Shangó's salutes (Luis Ezequiel Torres, personal communication).

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MORTON MARKS is an ethnomusicologist, folklorist, and producer specializing in the music of the Caribbean, Brazil, and Lusophone Africa. He has been a coeditor of the *Endangered Music Project* on Rykodisc, and of the *Alan Lomax Caribbean Voyage Series* on Rounder Records. Two of his field recordings have appeared on Smithsonian Folkways: *Music of Pará, Brazil: Carimbó, Pajelança, Batuque and Umbanda* (F-4285), and *Afro-Dominican Music from San Cristóbal, Dominican Republic* (F-3426).

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Produced, compiled, and annotated by Morton Marks

Collected by Lydia Cabrera and Josefina Tarafa with Oduardo Zapullo and Benito Bolle, sound engineers

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Lukumi transcriptions and translations by Miguel "Willie" Ramos

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