Smithsonian Folkways Recordings MATANZAS CUBA, ca 1957:

AFRO-CUBAN SACRED MUSIC
FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE from the historic recordings of LYDIA CABRERA and JOSEFINA TARAFA



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p ecorded in Matanzas in 1957, these ritual **N**rhythms provide a direct link to the music of 19th-century colonial Cuba, and provide a window into the religious life of the first generations of Africans who worked the sugar mills. Collected by Lydia Cabrera and Josefina Tarafa, these recordings preserve extremely rare bembé lukumi ritual drumming used by practitioners of Santería to summon the gods or salute Cuba's African nations. It is remarkably different from the urban style heard today in Havana, although some of the same songs were sung in both city and countryside. With origins in Yoruba religion in West Africa, this music reveals the roots of today's Afro-Cuban ceremonial practices. 32-page booklet, extensive notes, photos, 69 minutes

- Toque Ovo 2:56
- Toque Arará 3:59
- Toque Mina-Yona
- Mo juba ocha (I pay
- Ogún Onile 1:55
- Ibarabo ago mo juba (Song for Eleguá)
- Song for Ogún 3:16
- Oshosi Avilodá Mala Mala De (Song
- Omodara Dei (Song
- Babaluaivé 3:20
- Shangó 5:18
- Ová 4:12
- Yemayá 3:18
- Osain Songs 1:23

- Guirigi tongo un
- 16 Magó kueki baya arere 1:22
- 17 Okun leo, vamo' pa' la loma 1:12
- Toque Yesá for Inlé
- Uru Dadá 2.41
- Shango moforibale
- Yevé / Songs for Iroko 2:18
- Toque Yesá for Oshún 1:36
- Moforibale Ogún
- Olokun 1:58
- Toque egbado 1:27
- Toque de bembé

mene mene ó 1-10

MATANZAS, CUBA, ca. 1957:

AFRO-CUBAN SACRED MUSIC FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE

from the historic recordings of LYDIA CABRERA and JOSEFINA TARAFA

- Toque Oyo 2:56
- Toque Arará 3:59
- Toque Mina—Yona (Obatalá) 2:19
- Mo juba ocha (I pay homage to the orisha) 1:49
- Ogún Onile 1:55
- 6. Ibarabo ago mo juba (Song for Eleguá) 3:06
- Song for Ogún 3:16
- Oshosi Avilodá Mala Mala De (Song for Oshosi) 4:47
- Omodara Dei (Song for Orishaoko) 2:59
- 10. Babaluaiyé 3:20
- 11. Shangó 5:18
- 12. Oyá 4:12

- 13. Yemayá 3:18
- 14. Osain Songs 1:23
- 15. Guirigi tongo un mene mene ó
- 16. Magó kueki baya arere 1:22
- 17. Okun leo, vamo' pa' la loma 1:12
- 18. Toque Yesá for Inlé 1:52
- 19. Urú Dadá 2:41
- 20. Shangó moforibale 2:52
- 21. Yeyé/Songs for Iroko 2:18
- 22. Toque Yesá for Oshún 1:36
- 23. Moforibale Ogún (I pay homage to Ogún) 1:42
- 24. Olokun 1:58
- 25. Toque egbado 1:27
- 26. Toque de bembé 3:30





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 Montmarte, 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 Omí-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).

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



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

Magic Mountain). The stories were first published in 1936 by Gallimard in a French translation.

In 1938, with warelouds gathering in Europe, Cabrera returned to Havana. In 1940, she and María 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

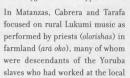
Marianao, on the edge of the mostly Black Pogolotti district, which Cabrera had often visited on previous trips to Havana, and which she continued to frequent. In 1942, she traveled to other parts of Cuba, continuing

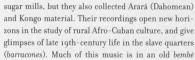
her studies of Afro-Cuban religions and folklore, which ultimately focused on the Havana area and Matanzas. This was the beginning of the years of research that culminated in her masterwork, El monte.

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 leastknown 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).







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 in "Yeyé," (track 21).

If the music on Havana, Cuba, ca. 1957: Rhythms and Songs for the Orishas (SFW CD 40489) 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 brother-in-law. Many of the rhythms in the orú de igbodú 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 SFW CD 40489. (track 35). A passage in El monte details the setting for these songs, which accompany the preparation of the sacred water (omiero) used to "wash and to make santo," to purify the neophytes (iyawós) during the first days of their ordination into santeria:

"Sometimes the *iyaré* (principal godmother) and *oyighona* (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 *santerus* answer in chorus. There are sixteen, seventeen, or twenty-one prayers for Osain; that is, with these songs and prayers, the *santerus* make *orú* 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 ["Lukumí 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, Herkovits had found in the Trinidadian village of Toco a "Yariba" song. Oshún Talade ("Oshún is worthy of queenship"), that 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).

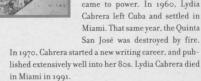
The Cabrera-Tarafa recordings can thus serve as a hub of Afro-Atlantic music, connecting Cuba not only to New York and Trinidad, but to Bahia, Brazil. Awareness that branches of the Yoruba diaspora have musical links goes back to the early 1940s or before. Recent musical experiments have made

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 Iosefina 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 left Cuba and settled in Miami. That same year, the Quinta





Herbalist, Havana

4



MATANZAS, 1957

A paradox of Yoruba-based nature religions in the Americas is that, from the city of Porto Alegre in southern Brazil to the Bronx, they are typically practiced in urban settings. Exceptions are the Shango religion of Grenada, which has remained connected to the agricultural cycle of the island, and the Lukumi religion of rural and semirural Matanzas. In the heart of a sugargrowing area about sixty-five miles east of Havana, the Yoruba-dominated areas of Matanzas form a second nucleus of orisha worship in western Cuba. Lydia Cabrera and Josefina Tarafa had been conducting research in Matanzas before 1954, the year El monte was first published. The book contains numerous references to the province, and some photos that Tarafa had taken there. While El monte and other Cabrera publications are focused on the religious culture of Havana and its environs, with some reference to Matanzas, the recordings are just the opposite, the great bulk of them devoted to rural styles.

West African history was still very much in evidence in the Matanzas of the late 1950s, in the memories of old people who remembered stories of the wars with the king of Dahomey that had brought their ancestors to Cuba. In Cárdenas and other towns, Cabrera and Tarafa found an "Africa in miniature." In the countryside, they discovered an Africanized landscape: lakes, rivers, streams, woods, and savannas transformed into sanctuaries sacred to Yoruba orishas and Dahomean vodun. Many older people still spoke bozal, an Afro-Cuban creole full of African words (Castellanos 1988: 220–26). Bembé drums were still playing rhythmic salutes to some of the different African "nations" present at the sugar mills.

Cabrera wrote that going from Havana to Matanzas was like passing back to the 19th century. This was the peak of the sugar boom, when Cuba and Brazil were the major centers of sugar production in the Americas (Mintz 1985). The expansion of the Cuban sugar industry drew hundreds of thousands of Africans into the slave trade. It is estimated that between the years 1835 and 1864, almost 400,000 were brought to Cuba. The largest numbers by far during those years came from the Bight of Benin, and included Yoruba, Fon, Popó, and Nupe peoples. Other "nations" drawn into the slave trade to Cuba during this period were he Ibo, the Efik, and the Ibibio from the Gulf of Biafra; many Kongo-Angola groups; and the Macuá from Mozambique (Castellanos and Castellanos 1988: 19–59).

In the cities, African identities coalesced in churchsponsored associations known as *cabildos*, which allowed members of the same African "nation" to preserve their culture and language. But about 80 percent

Left: The sacred lagoon of el Socorro

of newly arrived Africans, known as bozales, were sent to the sugar mills, and in Matanzas, rural slaves far outnumbered those in urban centers (Knight 1974). No mention of cabildos at the mills survives, but it is clear that African ethnicity was recognized there, even without the formal organization of cabildos. At the sugar estates in Matanzas, judging from the names found on these recordings and from eyewitness accounts, a

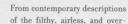
broad distinction was drawn among Yoruba, Dahomean, and Kongo peoples, and finer distinctions were made among several of these. At least three Yorubaspeaking groups, the Oyo, the Egbado, and the Yesá (Ijesha), are recognized in the descriptive names of drum pieces in this collection, as are the Arará, the Mina, and the Gangá-Ñongobá, a Bantu speaking people.

SAINTS OF THE BARRACOONS

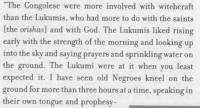
The music in this collection is a window into life at the sugar mills during tiempo España, the colonial period. The sugar estates were more like small, self-contained industrial townships than "plantations" in the North American sense (Knight 1974). Before 1830, rural slaves had been quartered in bohíos, cabins or huts like those found in the Cuban countryside. But with the great tide of arriving Africans, sugar growers had to devise new ways to house the workforce. They invented

the barracón, which in some ways resembled a prison, or even a 20th-century concentration camp. The barracones de nave built during the 1830s were rectangular in shape, of rubblework walls and a tiled roof. Inside, pinewood walls divided the space into rooms. The floor was of beaten earth, with posts driven in to support the slaves' sleeping platforms. In the 1840s and 50s, the barracón de patio was created: a square, walled-in, pris-

onlike structure with a single heavily barred door to the outside and often with no exterior windows. The interior patio, often very large, was enclosed by an overhanging roof, which gave access to rooms where the slaves were crowded together, sometimes separated by age, sex, and marital status. As many as four hundred slaves might have occupied a single barracón de patio (Castellanos and Castellanos 1988).



crowded barracones, patrolled by guards and attack dogs, and in view of the hellish daily work required by the cutting and the industrialized processing of sugarcane, it is amazing that anyone could have survived long, let alone lead a life dedicated to spiritual concerns. Nevertheless, there is evidence that African religious practices flourished, maintained at the individual level and on a day-to-day basis. Someone who had witnessed life in the barracon firsthand gave this account:



their own tongue and prophesying... The old Lukumis liked to have their wooden figures of the gods with them in the barracoon.

All these figures had big heads and were called oché" (Montejo 1968:34–36). These are the Yoruba thunder axes (oshe Shango), used as dance wands in ceremonies in Nigeria, where every Shango initiate is given one for his personal shrine (Bascom 1969:84).



Slaves in kitchen of barracoon, ca. 1860

In the late 1950s, festivals were

still being organized by descendants of 19th-century sugar mill workers, in honor of their ancestors and what Lydia Cabrera calls the "resident orishas" of the sugar mill (Cabrera and Tarafa 1958). With this phrase, Cabrera provided a clue as to how another feature of Yoruba religion and social organization was adapted to the exigencies of life in the slave quarters. Slaves maintained ritual continuity between West Africa and Cuba by treating the barracón de patio like the compound of a Yoruba village: "In the Cuban countryside, and espe-

cially in the plantations and sugar mills, the Lukumi religion was carried on in a manner similar to the more personal, family-oriented worship practiced commonly in Yoruba compounds [in West Africa]. In this system, the orisha was consecrated for the entire compound or household. The oracles indicated a representative from the family to attend the deity's worship, and certain ceremonies were performed to grant the indi-

vidual the right to do so.... This person, although considered an Olorisha [priest] because he or she attended the deity, was not duly ordained into the priesthood; that is, he or she was not crowned [ordained—see notes to SFW CD 40489]. This type of worship in Cuba was called santo parado (standing saint), or santo de dotación (work gang's saint)" (Ramos 2000:95). It was these "resident orishas," the collective "saints" of the barracoon and the sugar mill, that were still being

honored in the Matanzas countryside when these recordings were made.

In the cities and towns of Matanzas, slaves transported, stored, and packed sugar and other agricultural products, rendered domestic service, and did other kinds of work. During the colonial period, Yoruba and Dahomean cabildos had been established in Ciudad Matanzas, Jovellanos, and other places. With the end of slavery, in the 1880s, migration from the sugar mills

African slaves making sugar, with mayoral

(overseer), Western Cuba, ca. 1860

swelled the ranks of the Lukumi and Arará already in the towns. For example, Dahomeans from the sugar mill called España went to the town of Perico, and those from the Unión and Santa Rita mills went to Agramonte and Jovellanos, respectively. Some founded cabildos in these places, including the one called San Manuel y Sus Descendientes, founded around 1900 in Jovellanos by Esteban Baró, an important source of information concerning Arará music for Fernando Ortiz (Vinueza 1981). Baró bore the name of the owners of the Santa Rita mill (Vinueza 1988:25), today called the Central René Fraga. The contemporary Arará folklore group Oiún Degara is made up almost entirely of members of the Baró family.

In the Matanzas cabildos, Yoruba and Dahomean drum styles still survive. In the Lukumí cabildo of San Juan Bautista in Ciudad Matanzas, Yesá drums can still be heard (see note to tracks 18 and 22). Dahomean drums thunder in the Arará temples. Batá drums are played in the urban casas de ocha, and their construction and playing styles are somewhat different from the Havana batá heard on the companion volume to this collection (Marks 1994). But the most common drum type in rural Matanzas remains the bembé drum, which Cabrera called the typical style of ará okó, the countryside.

BEMBÉ LUKUMÍ

The Yoruba term bembé refers to a single-headed drum, played with a curved stick to accompany dancing. But in Cuba the construction and nomenclature of bembé drums reflect influences from non-Yoruba Afro-Cubans, and differ from region to region. In Matanzas, the most common types of bembé drums are cylindrical, conical, or barrel shaped, with a single head of muleskin, oxhide, or some other type of animal skin, nailed to the body of the drum. The nailed head is typical of certain kinds of Kongo-influenced drums. Another type of bembé drum is double headed and played horizontally, with the skins nailed to the body of the drum or laced in a zigzag, as in the double-headed Yesá drums, from which they may be derived. Other kinds of bembé drums in Matanzas include pegged varieties, which resemble Arará models (Sáenz 1997).

The terminology of bembé drums reflects similar intra-African contacts. In some parts of Matanzas, the drums have the same names as a set of yuka drums, of Kongo derivation: caja, mula, and cachimbo for the master, middle, and smallest drum, respectively. However, though bembé drums are found all over the island, only in parts of Matanzas does an entire set of them have Yoruba names: iyá for the master drum, as in the batá ensemble: obbatá for the middle drum: and erúm for the smallest support drum (Sáenz 1997:305). This last term may be related to the rum, the master drum of Brazilian Candomblé, and the jun of the Arará cabildos in Matanzas. (The words rum and jun would be pronounced almost the same way.)

From a musicological perspective, the greatest value of this collection is in its preservation of numerous ritual bembé-drumming styles, which may lead to a reassessment of the way musicologists have viewed these drums. From the Havana-centric point of view and because of their association with las quimbambas (remote areas, "the sticks"), bembé drums have always been seen, at best, as secondary to batá. While it is true

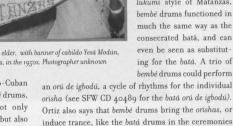
that bembé drums do not contain Añá, the indwelling spirit found in the consecrated batá trio, one of the most misleading statements about bembé drums is that they are not ceremonial. This attitude is apparent in an entry in a respected dictionary of Cuban music: "Bembé: A festival held for the amusement of the gods and orishas, with the playing of drums. Of a profane nature" (Orocovio 1992: 52).

Fernando Ortiz, in his massive study of Afro-Cuban percussion (1996), devotes little space to bembé drums, but supplies relevant information that not only describes the music heard in this collection, but also hints at why bembé drums are viewed as nonritual. Writing not long before these recordings were made, he noted that in Matanzas there were three types of bembé drumming: bembé lukumí, bembé lukumí criollo, and suncho. It is the first "African" style, sung in Cuban Yoruba

and in a non-Europeanized scale, that is heard on these recordings, and that is found in precisely the places where Cabrera and Tarafa recorded, near the towns of Jovellanos, Pedro Betancourt, and Agramonte, in the center of the province. In comparison, bembé criollo is characterized by "corrupted" and sometimes unintelligible texts and simplified drumming, and suncho is played as a recreational dance with little religious content

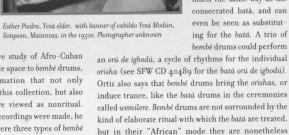
(Ortiz 1996, vol. 2). The suncho style may have given writers the idea that all bembé drumming is "profane."

In parts of Cuba, bembé drumming has been deritualized, but in the bembé lukumí style of Matanzas, hembé drums functioned in much the same way as the consecrated batá, and can even be seen as substituting for the batá. A trio of bembé drums could perform



accompanied by ritual procedures. In the most impor-

tant religious "houses" in Matanzas, drummers are





Bembé drums at outdoor ceremony, the Ñangalé, held at daybreak

supposed to have las manos lavadas (their hands washed), which means they have gone through special ceremonies before learning the sacred rhythms and playing for bembés (Sáenz 1997:309). Ortiz also notes that before a bembé ceremony began, someone would "throw the coconuts" (perform divination), and "feed" Eleguá so he might protect the dance as its "guardian" (Ortiz 1996).

In notes to the original recordings, Cabrera doesn't describe the bembé drums heard in this collection, but there is a Tarafa photograph (facing page) of two cylindrical drums with nailed heads. In a performance that included a full set of three bembé drums, the master drum (iyá) would have been in the center, the obbatá or middle drum to the left, and the small drum (erúm) to the right. The master drum is played with a stick (bagueta or palito) and a hand, with the drummer sometimes hitting the stick against the body of the drum or against the rim and striking the center of the drumhead with his fist. The support drums are played with sticks. The function of the master drum (iyá) is similar to that of the master drum in Brazilian Candomblé and Haitian Vodun: its patterns are closely related to the dancing, and the intention of the drummer's variations is to bring on possession. As can be heard in these recordings (tracks 4 and 8), the master drummer plays off-accents under the singing, in much the same way as in Candomblé. He also plays against the hoe blade (guataca), which another performer strikes with a piece of iron or wood to keep the basic timeline.

The hoe blade is a possible Arará influence in bembé lukumí. In Dahomey, it has or had a ritual significance beyond its use as a musical instrument: as a tool, the hoe digs graves and opens the road to death and the beyond, and its agricultural use suggests fertility and abundance (Ortiz 1996). In construction, the Cuban hoe blade looks very much like the ogán, the timekeeper used in Arará music in Cuba, and in Rada and other kinds of music in Haiti. It also recalls the old hoe (oldoe), "the bell-gong that signals spiritual forces and sounds the essential nation code of the Cromanti rhythm" in the Nation dance of Carriacou, an island in the southeastern Caribbean (McDaniel and Hill 2001; see note to track 1 below).

The bembé drums are also accompanied by a single beaded-gourd rattle (ágbe, shekeré). An ensemble of three such rattles, a hoe blade, and a single drum plays a Lukumí musical substyle called güiro (songs for Ogún, Babaluaiyé, Shangó, and Yemayá, tracks 7, 10, 11, 13). Other homemade percussion instruments, including a spoon on a bottle, are sometimes heard in this collection.

Next pages: Country lukumí procession, with güiro player and young goats in ritual jacket (alå), to be offered to the orishas



THE MUSIC

1. Toque Oyo

Performed by Domingo Hernández, Marcelo Carreras, Angel Rolando, drums; Domingo Hernández, Jr., hoe blade

A remarkable feature of this collection is that it contains several drum rhythms that bear the names of African "nations," as opposed to rhythms (toques) for specific orishas; these may be the only such Cuban recordings in existence. Rhythms found on another Caribbean island may give a clue to the significance of their Cuban counterparts. On Carriacou, a tiny island in the Grenadines, "rhythmic nation codes" are played as part of the Big Drum or Nation Dance, a composite of the musics of several African "nations." In the early days of its performance on Carriacou, each "nation" danced to its own rhythms. "It is the rhythmic nation codes which classified the people of the old society and which kept the memory of African origins strong" (McDaniel and Hill 2001). In Matanzas, drum codes probably functioned in a similar way, with each pattern of bembé lukumí drumming identifying and saluting a specific African people.

Oyo Yoruba were pulled into the slave trade with the collapse of their empire, which was attacked by the Fulani to their north. Oyo is the home territory of Shangó and related *orishas*, and its religious culture exerted a powerful influence in Havana (see notes SFW CD 40489), but this salute tells us that Oyo Yoruba were also a significant presence in Matanzas, especially in the town of Simpson (Ramos 2000:103).

The drums here play in a dense ensemble texture, which may be related historically to Oyo regional rhythms, which could have been played on a different style of drum. This track points up the *bembé* drums' ability to play in different styles, perhaps even imitating other drum families, as will be seen below.

2. Toque Arará

Performed by Domingo Hernández, Marcelo Carreras, Angel Rolando, drums; Domingo Hernández, Jr., hoe blade

Although overshadowed by the Yoruba, a considerable Dahomean presence existed in the part of Matanzas where these recordings were made. The name Arará, derived from the Dahomean city of Allada, is related to the term Rada in Haiti and Arrada on Carriacou. Arará cabildos had been founded in Cuba as far back as the 17th century, and the names that qualify the general Arará designation-Dajomé, Sabalú, Magino, Agicón, and others-reflect regional and ethnic differences (Sogbossi 1998). The name Sabalú refers to Savalu, a northern Dahomen town conquered by the Fon and recalled in the cabildo title Arará Sabalou. It was inhabited by the Mahi people, remembered in the cabildo called Arará Magino. In Matanzas, migrations from the countryside to the towns added to the existing urban Arará presence, which survives in Jovellanos, Perico, and Agramonte. As recently as the 1990s, an elderly resident of the town of Perico, a descendant of Dahomeans at the España sugar mill, remembered a

song in the Fon language, by which his ancestors had recalled their departure from the port of Ouidah in Dahomey (Sogbossi 1998).

While the previous track is in more of an ensemble style, this salute is an example of West African master drumming. At times, the lead drum lands on the strong or weak beats of the timeline (played on the hoe blade), and at other times he plays against it. When the master drummer's figures are in the strongest contrast to the hoe blade's timekeeping, they recall the cassés, rhythmic disruptions of the master drum (manman) of Haitian Rada, the Dahomean component of Vodun.

3. Toque Mina - Yona (Obatalá)

Performed by Domingo Hernández, Marcelo Carreras, Angel Rolando, drums; Domingo Hernández, Jr., hoe blade

Another African people in Cuba were the Mina-Popó, from the border area of what is now the Benin Republic and Togo (Castellanos and Castellanos 1988). Omí - Tomí, an old friend and respondent of Cabrera's from Havana, was the daughter of a Mina-Popó. She had explained to her the Dahomean-Yoruba connection in Cuba: "Lucumí, Arará, Dahomey, and Mina, they're all related. They understood one another, even though their languages were different. But their saints were similar—they traveled back and forth between their lands" (Cabrera 1983:26).

This passage helps explain the similarity between this Mina rhythm for Obatalá and the Haitian drum salute nago, played for Ogún, who, as Papa Ogou, heads up the family of the Iwa nago. the Yoruba orishas of Vodun. One

of his roads or avatars in Haiti is Ogou Olisha, or Obatalá. The close resemblance between the Cuban and Haitian rhythms leads back to Dahomey, where Gun (Ogún) is considered a child of Lisa and Mawu, male and female counterparts of the Yoruba orisha Obatalá. These details are found in a book by Pierre Verger (1981), which treats the Nigerian and Dahomean sources of Candomblé. Verger had visited Matanzas with Cabreria in 1957. It is unlikely that he suspected that something he would write years later about Dahomey would illustrate the field recordings his friend was making in Cuba around the time of his visit there.

4. Mo juba ocha (I pay homage to the orisha)

Performed by Inés Sotomayor and group

Inés Sotomayor, an elderly song leader (akpwón), was a well known and respected priestess (iyalocha) in Jovellanos and the surrounding area. A surviving member of the work gang (dotación) of the defunct Arrati sugar mill, she was a "child" of Agróniga (Babaluaiyé), one of the most venerated orishas at that mill. She organized and led the annual festival that drew crowds of descendants of the Yoruba slaves of Arrati, a festival that honored their ancestors and the saints of the barracoons.

Here, she offers prayers to her *orishas*, her ancestors, and her natural parents and godparents, whose names must be mentioned in every ceremony and whose permission must be sought to carry out any rite.

5. Ogún Onile

Performed by Inés Sotomayor and group

If Shangó reigned in Havana, Ogún was the major orisha of the Matanzas countryside, the other Yoruba nucleus in western Cuba (Montejo 1968). Ogún Onile is the road of this orisha who left his throne to take up a hunter's life, which relates him to el monte, in the sense

of the forest or the bush. Like Alberto Yenkins (heard below on tracks 19-21) Inés Sotomayor's songs and singing style have an archaic quality, which probably dates back to the 19th century and tiempo España.

6. Ibarabo ago mo juba

(Song for Eleguá)

Marcos Portillo Dominguez and group

This song is from the beginning of a complete orû cantado in bembê lukumî style. It is the same melody and substantially the same text as in the Havana versions, found on

SFW CD 40489 (tracks 1 and 6). Thus it is easy to compare the percussion orchestras that accompany the different versions, the city batá and the country bembé drums. Though lacking the internal "conversation" found in the batá trio, this song has a good deal of rhythmic complexity: the hoe blade, the güiro and support drums play interlocking patterns, and the master

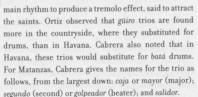
drummer plays off-accents on the side, rim, and head of his drum. This version is especially notable for its swelling chorus in the second section.

7. Song for Ogún

Performed by Marcos Portillo Dominguez, with ágbe trio, hoe blade and bembé drum

The ágbe, also called chekeré and güiro, is a large, hollow, dried gourd, covered with a network of beads, seeds, or cowries. The gourds can be shaken or struck to produce different effects. The master gourd can be thrown in the air and caught on the beat—a feature also observed in West Africa.

Ortiz gives names for the three guiros: the largest is called the caja (box), like the master drum in bembé lukumí; the middle size is the dos golpes (two beats); and the smallest is the salidor ("one who goes out") perhaps so named because it is shaken outside the





Melgarez playing his güiro

Like bembé, the guiro style of lukumi music is often considered "less sacred" than the batá drums, and the rhythms are less differentiated, but this track and the ones below (tracks 10, 11, 13) place it close to its West African origins. Even a listener not conversant in Afro-Cuban styles can sense the power of this music.

8. Oshosi Ayilodá Mala Mala De

(Song for Oshosi)

Sung by Marcos Portillo Dominguez and group

This is taken from the same orû cantado as the Eleguá song, heard on track six. Like that song, this song is in bembé lukumî style, a country version of the same melody heard on SFW CD 40489 (track 8), where it is accompanied by batá drums.

9. Omodara Dei (Song for Orishaoko)

Sung by Emiliano de Armas and group

Omodara deí. / Omodara Orishaoko. (2x) Olodumare deí. / Omodara Orishaoko.

The good son arrives. / The good son is Orishaoko. (2x) / Olodumare arrives. The good son is Orishaoko.

Migrations took place between the Yoruba nuclei of Havana and Matanzas, and an exchange of rituals occurred. Orishaoko's worship was brought to Matanzas from Nigeria in the 19th century by the priestess Maria 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). Cabrera noted that Orishaoko, an earth deity and orisha of crops and fertility, was more venerated in

Matanzas than in Havana. One might wonder why his worship survived in a system where the harvest did not belong to the cultivators, but it is not surprising that he was important in Matanzas, where the spectre of death hovered over the canefields, and the bodies of slaves were "feeding" this *orisha*, one of the senior owners of the earth.

10. Babaluaiyé

Performed by Marcos Portillo Dominguez and group

Babaluaiyé, another earth deity, was one of the important barracoon saints. Of Dahomean origin, his Arará and Lukumí roads converged in rural Matanzas, as they did in Havana, where he has both Dahomean and Yoruba songs and rhythms. Cabrera notes that the gūiro trio was sometimes played for him in Havana, probably because the batá could not play after 6 P.M., when rites for him would be held. In free rhythm, this gūiro song emphasizes the tremolo, instead of the percussive, side of the ágbe orchestra.

11. Shangó

Performed by Marcos Portillo Dominguez and group

The song leader was a member of the work gang at the Mariategui sugar mill, in Corral Falso (Pedro Betancourt) and his African name was Atéborá, given to Shangó initiates. According to Cabrera's notes, he had learned these songs from the old Oyo Yoruba at this sugar mill, people including Tá Bruno, Tá Cecilio, and the priestesses Aduyá (a name given to daughters of Shangó), Fatúma, Akibila, and Mañe Alagayú, whose names were still remembered in that district (Cabrera 1958).

12. Ová

Performed by Marcos Portillo Dominguez and group

If the Havana songs for Oyá on the companion volume to this CD are about her "wind" aspect, then this song addresses her fiery side. According to Yoruba myth, Shangó once sent Oyá to the kingdom of Bariba to find a magical preparation that, placed under his tongue, would allow him to spit thunderstones. She kept a bit of lightning for herself, hidden under her tongue (Gleason 1992).

The text of this song puns on the Lukumí word akará, and on the masculine and feminine powers implicit in the two meanings of the word. In Lukumí, akará can denote either a kind of spicy fried beancake (one of Oyá's favorite foods), or a lit candle wick, made of cotton. The pun is based on the fact that akará, the beancake, belongs to Oyá, and is not a suitably masculine offering to give to Shangó. What she is bringing him is lit wicks, so that he can eat fire, a part of his masculine powers. So this song can be seen as Oyá's empowering of her husband, Shangó.

A similar pun is also possible in Nagô, the Yoruba of Brazil, where akará can likewise mean a beancake or fire in edible form. This refers to the flaming cotton wads consumed by Oyá priestesses at midwinter festivals for Shangô, as they reenact Oyá's mission to Bariba and her theft of lightning. Again, it commemorates Oya's empowering of Shangô.

This song is a good example of a rhythmically "hot" bembé style, generated through the shifting relationship among the song leader, the chorus, and the rhythm

section. The main accents of the melody line maintain a general independence from the percussion, but in the first section of the song, the words $kara\ kara\ touch$ down on the main underlying rhythmic pulse. This kind of interplay between the melody and the percussion throughout the song demolishes another cliché, that bemb'e is rhythmically "cool" and "simple."

13. Yemayá

Performed by Marcos Portillo Dominguez and group

This song, called Aró, is found in more versions in this collection than any other. On the Havana CD (SFW CD 40489), it is heard unaccompanied, with batá drums, and as a solo batá rhythm. Aró denotes blue indigo dye, and is a reference to Yemayá as dyer (one of her roads is lbú Aró, deep place of indigo dye)—and owner of the sea. A pot of blue dye is kept on lbú Aró's shrine. Just as the batá rhythm called Aró is meant to represent in sound the transition from a calm to a turbulent sea, so the tremolos of this güiro trio, played in free rhythm, convey another kind of oceanic feeling, the vast expanse of Yemayá's domain.

14. Osain Songs

Recorded outdoors, like several other tracks in this collection, these songs are performed by Domingo Hernandez, a noted herbalist (olósaín) from the town of Jovellanos. He was considered knowledgeable in the magical and medicinal properties of the plants found in el monte, the bush. He would gather them for use in important ceremonies, including ordinations (asientos).

PALO SONGS-GANGÁ-ÑONGOBÁ

Performed by Florinda Pastor, Agustín Diago, and group

- 15. Guirigi tongo un mene mene ó
- 16. Magó kueki baya arere
- 17. Okun leo, vamo' pa' la loma

Kongo-Angola peoples were one of the largest groups in rural Matanzas, after the Lukumi and the Carabali. Gangá-Ñongobá is the Cuban name for a Bantu-speaking people identified as the Nyong, a subgroup of the Puku, from the Nigerian plateau north of the Bight of Biafra (Castellanos and Castellanos 1988). Their Kongo affinities are especially notable in the first song (track 15), whose yodellike melody has clear connections to Central African music. The second song (track 16) sounds like an invocation from Palo Monte or Mayombe, two of Cuba's Kongo-based religions. The third song (track 17) is a good example of domestic music making, with hands and feet adding to the drum accompaniment.

All these songs, called by the Kongo name of mambos, are performed by members of the Pastor family, whose hundred members kept up Gangá funerary rites, holding wakes where they would circle the corpse, singing, clapping, and dancing to the sound of a drum, and sending off the spirit before dawn.

18. Toque Yesá for Inlé

Performed by Domingo Hernández, Marcelo Carreras, Angel Rolando, drums; Domingo Hernández, Jr., hoe blade

Inlé (Erinlé), whose name in Yoruba means "elephant

in-the-earth" or "land-elephant," is the patron deity of Ilobu, a southwestern Nigerian trading town, which lies along the Erinlè River, a tributary of the Öshun River. Inlé is a complex orisha on both sides of the Atlantic, inhabiting both earth and water. In Nigeria, his roads are known as bib (pools, or deep parts of the river). His worship is carried out on a riverbank (Martin Tsang, personal communication; Verger 1981). Many of these roads are particular to his hunter aspect or his aquatic aspect.

In Cuba, Inlé combines several elements: with Ogún and Oshosi, he belongs to the triumvirate of hunters in the Lukumí pantheon. Inlé is considered the physician orisha, a healer with a knowledge of herbalism. He is also aquatic, a fisherman who hunts in the water.

One of the most fascinating aspects of bembé drums is that they can play in the style of, or even imitate, other drum families. In this bembé lukumí salute, the drums are playing in the style of the Yesá ensemble, whose characteristically short phrases they reproduce. The Yesá drums are cylindrical and double-headed, and are played in groups of three or four, with only one head played with sticks. The double-headed bembé drums may be derived from Yesá drums.

19. Urú Dadá

Performed by Alberto Yenkins and group

Alberto Yenkins, known as Yin, was one of the most traditional singers (olorín) in Matanzas. Elderly Lukumí worshippers (aborissás) from Jovellanos and other towns in the province said he sang "old style," the way they sang in slavery times.

Dadá is not a well known orisha in Cuba, and there are few rituals and songs for him, so this old track from Matanzas is rare indeed.

20. Shangó moforibale

Performed by Alberto Yenkins and group

Moforibale fu Shangó Obá [r]ere Oba koso olojú. / E airá ó.

I place my head on the ground for Shangó. / The king is [a] good [king]. / He who did not hang is watching. / Airá is a praise name for Shango.

"According to a [Nigerian] myth, it was a defeat in a magical contest that led Shango to leave Oyo and hang himself, although when lightning flashes, his worshippers shout "The king did not hang himself ('Oba ko so')" (Bascom 1969).

And when thunder rolls, they say, as does Yin on this track, "Kawo, kabiye sile," "Welcome, we prostrate ourselves before you" (Bascom 1972). To do so is to pay homage.

21. Yeyé/Songs for Iroko

Performed by Alberto Yenkins and group

In Nigeria and Dahomey, the iroko/loko is a kind of African teak (Chlorophora excelsa), but in Cuba, the

Yoruba gave this name to the ceiba tree ($Ceiba\ pentranda$), known in English as the kapok or silk-cotton tree. Lydia Cabrera devotes an entire chapter in $El\ monte$ to iroko, sacred to Lukumí, Arará, and Kongo peoples alike. There were several famous ceibas in Matanzas, and it was said that if a woman asked one of them for a child, it would grant her wish. The first song relates the story of a woman who makes promises to the iroko in

exchange for a child, and when she doesn't fulfill them, the tree takes the child back. This song is now associated with Oshún, the Yeyé (Mother) of the title. It is usually sung to Oshún to instigate possession; the sequence then moves into songs for iroko. As recorded by Cabrera and Tarafa, the first song accompanied a sacrifice for Oshún at the foot of the tree. The masterdrum pattern under Yin's vocal is especially powerful, and offers yet another facet of bembé lukumí.



Placing offerings at the foot of a ceiba tree

22. Toque Yesá for Oshún

Performed by Domingo Hernández, Marcelo Carreras, Angel Rolando, drums; Domingo Hernández, Jr., hoe blade

In the Ijesha region of southwestern Nigeria, the river that bears Oshún's name flows past Oshogbo, where her principal shrine is located. As in the salute for Inlé (track 18), the bembé ensemble here is imitating the short phrases typical of the yesá (Ijesha) drums.

23. Moforibale Ogún (I pay homage to Ogún)

Unknown solist with Inés Sotomayor and group

As noted earlier, Ogún rules in Matanzas. If Shangó is king (alafin), in Havana, then Ogún, always toiling at his anvil and forge, represents slavery in el campo, the rural areas. Other symbols of Ogún, including the machete and the mayordomo's whip, reinforced the connection between this orisha and rural slavery (Ramos 2000:106–7).

24. Olokun

Sung by Fernando Hernández with Inés Sotomayor's group

Olokun, sometimes considered a road of Yemaya, is owner of the mysterious and impenetrable depths of the sea. Olokun's main center of worship in West Africa is now in Benin City, Nigeria. This orisha was brought to Cuba in the mid 19th century, and his worship became centered in two places, both of them port towns: Regla, across the bay from Havana, and Ciudad Matanzas. The priestess Monserrate González, known as Obateró brought Olokun directly to Matanzas from the Egbado region of Nigeria, northwest of Lagos. A waterpot filled with several kinds of coral, shells, and other ingredients represented the Olokun she brought from Africa This pot was passed on to Ferminita Gómez, a priestess of Yemayá, who also became the custodian of the only existing set of drums in Cuba dedicated to Olokun (Mason 1996: 26, 27, 29). These four goblet-shaped pegged drums, now about 140 years old, remain in her house in Ciudad Matanzas. The songs and dances these drums accompanied were considered to be of Egbado origin (Vinueza 1997:251).

While this compilation was being researched, some of the musicians consulted by the producer thought that the drums heard on this track may in fact have been this set of Olokun drums. If this were the case, then Cabrera and Tarafa must have recorded in Ferminita's house, which the Olokun drums never leave. But since the <code>akp-won</code> is a male, this possibility was ruled out, since only women would have sung for Olokun there.

25. Toque egbado

Performed by Domingo Hernández, Marcelo Carreras, Angel Rolando, drums; Domingo Hernández, Jr., hoe blade

This nation salute has also been identified as being in the style of the egbado (Olokun) drums, described above. Olokun is obviously an orisha of coastal peoples, and in Cuba, egbado, besides being a "nation" designation, has connotations of "coastal" (Cabrera 1970).

26. Toque de bembé

Performed by Domingo Hernández, Marcelo Carreras, Angel Rolando, drums; Domingo Hernández, Jr., hoe blade

The rhythmic shifts within this intricate bembé lukumí ensemble contribute to its evocative and dramatic processional quality, which makes it well suited to end this collection.

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Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch in 1948 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In the ensuing decades, New York City—based Folkways became one of the largest independent record labels in the world, reaching a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Moses Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are available by special order on high-quality audio cassettes or CDs. Each recording includes the original LP liner notes.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings was formed to continue the Folkways tradition of releasing significant recordings with high-quality documentation. It produces new titles, reissues of historic recordings from Folkways and other record labels, and in collaboration with other companies also produces instructional videotapes and recordings to accompany published books and other educational projects.

The Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Dyer-Bennet, Fast Folk, Monitor, and Paredon record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. They are one of the means through which the center supports the work of traditional artists and expresses its commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding.

You can find Smithsonian Folkways Recordings at your local record store. Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Dyer-Bennet, Fast Folk, Monitor, and Paredon recordings are all available through:

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings Mail Order 750 9th Street, NW, Suite 4100,

Washington, DC 20560-0953

phone 1 (800) 410-9815 (orders only)

fax 1 (800)853-9511 (orders only)

(Discover, MasterCard, Visa, and American Express accepted)

For further information about all the labels distributed through the center, please consult our Internet site (www.si.edu/folkways), which includes information about recent releases, our catalogue, and a database of the approximately 35,000 tracks from the more than 2,300 available recordings (click on database search). To request a printed catalogue write to the address above or e-mail folkways@aol.com

