CRADLE OF THE NEW WORLD
Music from the Dominican Republic
Recorded by Verna Gillis With Ramón Daniel Perez Martinez
ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4283

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

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

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. 76-750412

WARNING: UNAUTHORIZED REPRODUCTION OF THIS
RECORDING IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW AND SUBJECT TO
CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.

©1976 FOLKWAYS RECORDS AND SERVICE CORP.
43 W. 81st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A.

CRADLE OF THE NEW WORLD
Music from the Dominican Republic
Recorded by Verna Gillis
With Ramón Daniel Perez Martinez
DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4283
CRADLE OF THE NEW WORLD
Music from the Dominican Republic
Recorded by Verna Gillis with Ramón Daniel Perez Martinez
Vol. 3

Lying mid-way between Puerto Rico and Cuba in the West Indies is the Dominican Republic, which occupies the eastern two-thirds of an island, the other of which is Haiti. It is the largest of the Greater Antilles.

The aboriginal name of the island was Quisqueya which means "mother of the earth." When Columbus discovered the island in 1492 he re-named it "Espanola." Santo Domingo, founded in 1496, is the capital city.

In this oldest city of the New World one still sees the remains of the first church built in America. Its foundations were laid in 1502. Here is the house where Cortes kept the court records before he had ever heard of Mexico. From here Ponce de Leon set out in search for the Fountain of Youth. Here lived Pizarro before he went to Panama and sailed down the west coast to conquer the Inca Empire. Here, Padre de las Casas entered the priesthood and, ironically, in indignation because of the abuse of the Indians by the Spaniards, began to import slaves from Africa to make work lighter for the Indian laborers.

Here was founded the first University in the New World when in 1538 a royal charter was granted for the establishment of the University of St. Thomas. Here, a tribal queen named Anacaona gave the earliest demonstration of native dances in the New World. Here we have the first attempted insurrection in the New World.

There were two main Spanish settlements in two separate areas—one in and around Santo Domingo, and in the north in the lowlands of the Cibao. The rapid destruction of the indigenous population by epidemics of disease introduced by the Spanish colonists took away the very basis of economic prosperity in "Espanola" and greatly changed the livability of the island in Spanish terms.

Half a century before the discovery of the Dominican Republic, there had been a series of explorations and discovery voyages initiated on the western coast of Africa. These voyages were patronized and encouraged by the Portuguese. This in turn led to the discovery of Guinea and to the slave business. There was a slave company that worked via Seville and which supplied the Americas with slaves brought from Guinea, Angola, Cabo Verde, Congo, etc. The Spanish seem to have shown a preference for slaves from Guinea as the Spaniards considered them as the "...happiest and most musically inclined ones."

In connection with the declining indigenous population, by 1518 the importation of slaves really began to increase and statistics dated 1606 give a breakdown of the population as follows:

Total Population = 10,817
White = 1,069
Black = 9,748
Slaves = 9,698
Free blacks = 50
Percentage of blacks = 81%
Per cent of slaves = 80%

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

During the government of Diego Colon, Christopher Colon’s (Columbus’) brother, it was decreed that all slaves should be Christians. It was also authorized that each inhabitant should have a female slave for domestic services.

In 1522 the first insurrection in the New World took place by the Isabel River in Azua. This insurrection failed.

After 1550 the Spaniards were attracted elsewhere and the communities on Espanola were neglected. In the Cibao, where the indigenous population had been growing tobacco long before the arrival of Columbus, this crop continued and was the main product of export. Today, sugar is the main industry and export item.

By the end of the 18th century, contrasts between the eastern and western parts of the island began to appear. In Haiti, the French colony, 88% of a total population of 254,000 were slaves brought from Africa. In the Dominican Republic there were 103,000 inhabitants of whom 30% were slaves.

The last decade of the 18th century was one of violent disorder leading to the ruin of the colonial economy. Ownership of Espanola passed from Haiti to the Dominican Republic and back and forth again. In 1803 Haiti declared its independence from the French. The Spanish colony declared its independence from Spain in 1821 and with this slavery was abolished. At this point Haiti invaded and took control of the entire island. The island was then ruled by President Peter Boyer. In 1824 he contacted a black immigration from Philadelphia and offered them the privilege of civil and political rights. That same year, 6000 black American immigrants landed in Santo Domingo on November 29th and December 4th. They were sheltered in an old convent called "Las Mercedes" which they used as a Methodist Church. They were distributed to many parts of the country. The three main settlements were in Samana, Puerta Plata and Monte Cristo. The black immigrants to Samana were the first to bring Protestantism to the Dominican Republic which is a Catholic country.

It wasn’t until 1844 that the Dominicans were able to push the Haitians back and finally gain the status of an independent country. In 1869 the people of the Dominican Republic voted to ask for adoption by the United States but at that time the United States didn’t want the responsibility of additional territory.

In 1916 the United States illegally occupied the Dominican Republic. This was during World War I and the U.S. reason for these actions was the necessity felt by the government to secure approaches to the Panama Canal. This foreign occupation ended in 1924.

In 1930, General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina was elected president. The "tyranny of Trujillo" lasted thirty two years, ending with his brutal murder.

In 1965 the United States military landed for the second time in the Dominican Republic. This time it was in an "attempt to normalize" a government that was being threatened by a leftist attempt to take over the government. This brief occupation ended with the election of Pres. Bohlauen who is still in office.

Recorded in January, 1976 by Verna Gillis with Ramon Daniel Perez Martinez

Cover photograph by Verna Gillis
All other photographs by Verna Gillis and Ramon Perez

Suggested Bibliography
Lizardo, Pradigue. Danzas y Bailes Folkloricos Dominicanos.
Taller Press, Santo Domingo, 1974

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

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

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

Partial Text

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

Band 2 "Los Congos del Espiritu Santo" - "Camino Reale" (The Real Path)
Recorded in Villa Mella
Lead singer and maraccas*- Bienvenida Vargas Depozo
Palo mayor* - Victoriano Fortunato Vargas
Alcahuete* - Vincente Vargas
Maraccas - Albertino "Moreno" Graciano
Canoa* - Donatilia Vargas
The **palos** are cylindrical drums carved out of a single piece of wood. They are
hallowed out and covered with a goat skin. They come in two basic sizes - Palo
Mayor is approximately five feet high, with a head 11" in diameter. Palo menor
is approximately 34" high and 9" in diameter.

Alcahuete - Smaller drum
Canoita - Instrument made of wood with a handle in a rectangular shape which is
struck with a wooden stick held in the other hand. It adds rhythmic accompaniment.
Maraccas - Made from the fruit of a dried higuero filled with small rocks or
seeds. Generally played in pairs and often the lead singer is the same one who
plays the maraccas to accompany oneself rhythmically.

One informant told us the following concerning the origins of Los Congos:
"A Saint of the Holy Spirit was found in a guava field where there was a
trunk of dried copal.(a type of tree.) This Saint was playing music for three
nights. The Saint had the drums (mayor and menor) and the sticks (canoitita).
Turuvira (the name of a woman) was the owner of that land and she found the Saint
and she raised the money and formed a brotherhood that developed into a church.
The Saint was found with a book that contained 21 songs. This happened 90 to
100 years ago. It is completely Dominican but naturally it has African origins."
The Feast of the Holy Ghost is the main time for Los Congos to perform, but it
is also done at any funeral ritual. It can be performed at any time of year.
Their performances are hardly ever absent from funeral rituals. This dance is
still performed in church at the time of a funeral. The Brotherhood of the Holy
Ghost makes a procession through the streets of the town after Mass. Instead of
dancing inside the church, three songs are played in honor of the Holy Spirit. To become a member of the brotherhood, a dove of silver must be placed on the candidate's right shoulder and the following oath must be taken: "I am a brother (or sister) of the Holy Spirit."

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

* * * * *

**Los Congos del Espiritu Santo - Villa Mella**

**Band 3 - Los Congos - "Ensilla Mi Caballo" (Saddle my Horse)**
Lead singer and maraccas - Bienvenida Vargas Depozo
Palo Mayor - Victoriano Fortunato Vargas
Alcahuete - Vicente Vargas
Maraccas - Albertino "Moreno" Graciano
Canoa - Donatilia Vargas

* * * * *

**Band 4 - Los Congos - "Lambe los deos Manteca" (Lick your fingers, Manteca)**
Lead singer and maraccas - Albertino "Moreno" Graciano
Palo Mayor - Victoriano Fortunato Vargas
Alcahuete - Vicente Vargas
Maraccas - Bienvenida Vargas Depozo
Canoa - Donatilia Vargas
Band 5 - Los Congos - "Le vamos a dar la Gracias." (We're going to thank you.)
Lead singer - Albertino "Moreno" Graciano
Palo Mayor - Victoriano Fortunato Vargas
Alcahuete - Vicente Vargas
Maraccas - Bienvenida Vargas Depozo
Canao - Donatilia Vargas

* * * * *
Side 2 - Band 1 "Baile, cuma, cum, baile." - a Bambula*
Recorded in Samana
Maraccas - Dona Bertilia
Palo mayor - Jorge, Bertilia's son
Palo mayor - Benjamin Perez
Female singer - Dona Bertilia
Male singer - Nino, a friend of Bertilia's
*In Samana there is a dance called bambula. The drums played are palos and are laid on the floor and the player sits on them right up front at the head of the drum.

* * * * *
Band 2 - "Ave Maria, llena de Gracia." - a Salves* (Hail Mary, full of Grace)
Male singer - Nino
Female singer - Bertilia
Chorus: Benjamin Perez Jorge Bertilia Nino
*Salves are religious songs of supplication to the Virgin Mary.

Partial Text
Fue conservada
Limpia sin manchar
y era Maria
Llena de gracia
repeat above four lines
Palomita blanca
Encumbara tu vuelo
Llevale esta carta
al Rey de los cielos.
repeat above four lines
El Padre Santo
en su sacristía
Le presenta el Cristo
Hijo de Maria
repeat above four lines

* * * * *

English Translation
She was conceived
Clean without stains
It was Maria
Full of grace
repeat above four lines
Little white dove
Take this letter with you
in your flight
To the King of the skies
repeat above four lines
The Holy Father
in his sacristy
presents Christ
Son of Mary
repeat above four lines
Side 2 - Band 3 - "Yo traigo un lirio" - (I bring a bouquet)
Accordion - Seseco Martinez
Palo mayor - Jorge
Male singer - Nino

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

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

Band 4 - "Viejo Luis" (Old Louis) a Bambula
Palo mayor - Jorge
Palo mayor - Benjamin Perez
Maraccas and female singer - Bertilia

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

* * * *

Band 5 - Three children's songs - Recorded in Seccion Acosta, Samana
# 1 - Text
Envuelto en un misterio
La vi pasar
Soltera iba llorando
luego entró a un viejo cementerio.
Es una cruz
que se alejó llorando

English Translation
Involved in a mystery
I saw her go by
alone. She was crying.
Then she entered an old cementary.
It is a cross
that left crying.
La volvi a ver
ya no lloraba
ante la cruz nada decía
con otro amante
el campo visitaba
al ver la vieja tumba
todo se reía.

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

# 2
Cuando yo me pongo
A gozar la noche entera
que yo voy por donde quiera
Pero para casa no hoy
En casa soy el que soy
y el que tengo los calzones
Quando vuelva a Pilones
la mujer no me amenaza
Porque yo mande mi casa
y yo llevo los pantelones
repeat above two lines
Tu llevas los pantelones
sobre la tabla de planchar
Porque la mujer te manda
y te tiene que callar
a mi nadie me lo diga
mucho menos la mujer.
Ella lo que sabe hacer
es mandar en la cocina
este caso de la gallina
los gallos con espolones

I saw her again
She was not crying
She stood speechless in front of the
cross
with another love she visited the
countryside
Upon seeing the old tomb she was all
laughs.

Take this as an example men of this
world
Don't believe in women nor in friends
Your friend is a dollar in your pocket
and a loved woman
her mother is loved.

When I decide
To enjoy the whole evening
I go wherever I want to.
But today I'm not going home.
At home I am the one who is,
and he who wears the pants.
When I return to Pilones
My woman doesn't threaten me
Because I rule in my house
and I wear the pants.
repeat above two lines
You have your pants
on the ironing board
because women rule you
and you can't say anything
Nobody better tell me
much less my woman.
What she knows how to do
is to run the kitchen
The case of the chicken
chickens with big spurs
Yo no le aguanto sermones
porque no soy mete cien-cien,
en casa yo soy el jefe
y llevo los pantelones
En casa yo soy el jefe
y llevo los pantelones.

# 3
Perejil, perejiloso,
yo no se con quien me caso
con un hombre caballero que
tenga mucho dinero
Yo soy quien repalto el pan
yo soy quien repalto el vino
Yo soy quien me presento
este fiel cuerpo divino.

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

Cover Photograph : Erasmo Errera, Villa Mella