Folk Songs of Puerto Rico
Recorded by Henrietta Yurchenco
With Peter Gold & Peter Yurchenco
Side I

Band 1:  Decima, 4:20
Band 2:  Aquinaldo, 2:39
Band 3:  Pasodoble, 3:45
Band 4:  Me Mataron El Gallo, 3:06
Band 5:  La Plena Viene de Cidra, 1:27
Band 6:  Waltz, 2:44
Band 7:  Guaracha - La Mujer del Zapatero, 2:30

Side II

Band 1:  Bomba, 1:30
Band 2:  Juba, 1:50
Band 3:  A. Van Aca, Van Aca, 1:00
        B. Meliton Ton Be, 3:30
Band 4:  A. El Robo de La Cometa, 1:15
        B. Dolores, 1:15
Band 5:  A. Venga Ron, 1:20
        B. Agua Tire, 1:15
Band 6:  Christmas Party
        A. Maria Magdalena, 0:45
        B. Waltz, 2:50
Band 7:  Piece for Concertina and Drum, 2:45
Band 8:  Mensaje de Alto, Rondalla del Templo
de Mita, 3:53

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43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A. 10023
Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. 71-781988

Folk Songs
of
Puerto Rico

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COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

ASCH MANKIND SERIES AHM 4412
Folk Songs of Puerto Rico

Recorded by Henrietta Yurchenco
With Peter Gold & Peter Yurchenco

Side I

Band 1: Pacina, 4:20.
Luis Marcano, singer. José Miguel Velez and Francisco Cruz, guitarists.
Recorded in Cidra, 1967.

(In decimas); Luis Marcano and Gilberto Laza, singers. José Miguel Velez and Francisco Cruz, guitarists.
Recorded in Cidra, 1967.

Band 3: Pasodoble, 3:45.
Luis Marcano, singer.
Recorded in Cidra, 1967.

Band 4: Me Mataron El Gallo. 3:06.
Luis Marcano, Gilberto Laza, singers.
Recorded in Cidra, 1967.

Band 5: La Plena Viene de Cidra, 1:27.
Luis Marcano and Gilberto Laza, singers.
Recorded in Cidra, 1967.

Band 6: Waltz, 2:44.
Luis Marcano, singer.
Recorded in Cidra, Puerto Rico, 1967.

Band 7: Guaracha—La Mujer del Zapatero, 2:30.
Gilberto Laza, singer.
Recorded in Cidra, 1967.

Side II

Band 1: Bomba, 1:10.
Raul and Freddy Ayala.

Band 2: Juba, 1:00.
Raul and Freddy Ayala.

Band 3: A. Ven Acá, Ven Acá, 1:00.
B. Melitón Tón Be, 1:30.
Recorded during the fiesta of Santiago in Loiza Aldea, 1967.

Band 4: A. El Rabo De La Costera, 1:15.
B. Dolores, 1:15.
Recorded by the Parilla Family, Loiza Aldea, 1967.

B. Aigua Tira, 1:15.
Recorded by the Parilla Family, Loiza Aldea, 1967.

Band 6: Christmas Party.
A. Maria Magdalena, 0:45.
Recorded at a Loiza Aldea Christmas Party. Sung by Ana Iris Parilla, with gilero accompaniment.
B. Waltz, 2:50.
Played by Viviano Pizarro, concertina.

Band 7: Piece for Concertina and Drum, 2:45.
Played by Viviano Pizarro and "Chichito" Cruz Ortiz, drum.

Band 8: Mensaje de Alto, Rondalla del Templo de Mita, 3:57.
Recorded in Hato Rey, (San Juan), 1969.

Introduction

Puerto Rico or Borinquen, its original Indian name, has two important cultural and ethnic strains - Spanish and Afro-Caribbean. Discovered by Columbus in 1493 it was first settled under Ponce de Leon in 1508. The Conquistadores quickly subdued the local Taino Indians and later successfully fought back the marauding Caribs, one of the fiercest tribes of the area and after whom the Caribbean Sea was named. Today, hardly a trace of Indian culture or race remains.

From the beginning slaves were imported from Africa to work in the coastal areas. By 1850 half of Puerto Rico's 500,000 inhabitants were mixtures of African and Spanish. Slavery gradually began to fade out officially and ended in 1873. While prejudice against blacks is found on the island, it is more a class than a racial problem. The mixture of black and white is most vividly seen along the coast; whites predominate in the mountains. Despite the racial blending, Puerto Ricans generally feel a closer affinity to their Spanish heritage than to the African. However, African influences, particularly in music and dance are powerfully felt everywhere on the island.
From the 16th to the end of the 18th century Puerto Rico was a target for French, English and Dutch pirates and privateers. While other Caribbean islands were overrun, sacked and ruled in the name of various European powers Puerto Rico, well fortified, successfully fought would-be intruders.

During the 17th and 18th century Puerto Rico was also an important smuggling center. Because Spain had control over trade in the New World, what could not be done legally was done illegally. During periods when Spanish shipping allowed to a halt in San Juan and the city starved, the rest of the coastline prospered. Often with the connivance of corrupt Spanish administrators, smugglers from Dutch Curacao the Danish Virgin Islands and English Jamaica ran their sloops down to the tropical beaches exchanging linens, implements and slaves for animals, spices, tobacco and coffee (after 1850).

When Spain lost Latin America in the early 19th century it relaxed its trade restrictions on Puerto Rico. Settlers set up plantations, particularly coffee, in the mountains, and a long period of prosperity and peace came to the island.

On the political front, the 19th century was a fight for independence. After decades of political maneuvering, in 1897 the Puerto Ricans won their autonomy from Spain with a dominion status. Months later the United States occupied the island "liberating" it from Spain.

Puerto Rico has prospered since the 1950's when Operation Bootstrap, a plan which industrialized the economy, relieved to some extent the oppressive poverty. Puerto Ricans are American citizens, free to work and live on the mainland. They enjoy many social benefits like unemployment and social security. Yet, dissatisfaction is growing. The question is status. Who are we, to whom does our allegiance belong? Do we wish to be Puerto Ricans, or Americans?

This recording is a sampling of the musical traditions, both black and white - which have been grown and nurtured on Puerto Rican soil.

Side I
Band 1 - Decima
Luis Marcano, singer
José Miguel Velez and Francisco Cruz, guitarists, recorded in Cidra.

According to Gilbert Chase in his book "Music of Spain," the decima of Spain is a variant of the popular ballad based on a poetic form first cultivated in the sixteenth century. The traditional form is an eight-syllable, ten-line stanza with the following rhyming scheme:

ababacddc,

It is generally preceded by a four-line introduction. Popular throughout Latin America, it is used in various musical contexts; in Mexico, the valora, Uruguay and Argentina, the estilo and Venezuela, the guasa. In Puerto Rico the musical form is the seis, a basic country dance.

The decima deals with a wide variety of subjects. Unlike the ballad, it is given more to philosophical comment than story telling. Some mountain trovadores, although illiterate, have been known to improvise in perfect style on learned subjects, history, and incidents of the Bible. During World War II Jesus, El De Mayan, used to sing the news in decimas on a San Juan radio station. The custom has continued to this very day.

Le, lo, le, etc.

no tengo nada que hacer (2)
o en esta vida tengo que seguir
porque para me es un placer
todo lo puedo tener
no me tengo que ahorrar
yo no tengo en que pensar
este sistema nos ama
yo tengo todo a la mano
sin tener que trabajar

Le, lo, le, etc.

me levanto como a las diez
me tiro la ropa encima
luego voy a la cocina
tengo el almuerzo y el café
y luego como a las tres
un baño me voy a dar
y vuelta me pongo a dar
hacia abajo y hacia arriba
y así paso mi vida
sin tener que trabajar

Le, lo, le, etc.

me meto en vasilon (2)
me tomo la cerveza
y si esta la guitarrita
y si canto mi canción
y si consigo el vellón
yo lo juego en billard
puedo perder o ganar
porque voy a enfurecerme
si lo mio es entretenarme
sin tener que trabajar

Le, lo, le, etc.

yo tengo una madrecita (2)
elle es mi madre adorada
que me pone en la semana
mi ropa bien planchada
si no me lo hace mi hermanita
no la tengo que ahorrar
no lo tengo que mandar
para que voy a insistir
si así yo puedo vivir
sin que tengo que trabajar.

Le, lo, le, etc.

voy a dejar la ciudad (2)
al campo me voy a ir
a ver si puedo vivir
en toda tranquilidad
como allí hay felicidad
alguna buena a encontrar
allí fui a formar mi hogar
junto a mi esposa querida
y así pasare mi vida
sin tener que trabajar

Note: Final "R" is pronounced like "1" by many Puerto Ricans.

Le, lo, le, etc.

I have nothing to do (2)
In this life I must go on
Because for me it is a pleasure
I can have everything
I don't have to save
I have nothing on my mind
This system loves us
I have everything at hand
Without having to work.
Le, lo, le, etc.
I arise at about ten
I throw my clothes around
Then I go to the kitchen
I have lunch and coffee
And then about three
I take a bath
I go for a walk
To the bottom and up to the top
And that's how my life goes,
Without having to work.

Le, lo, le, etc.
I have become a wastrel (2)
I drink my little beer
And if there's a little guitar
I also sing my song
And if I get a nickel
I spend it on billiards
I can lose or win—
Why should I be mad
If I can entertain myself
Without having to work.

Le, lo, le, etc.
I have a little mother
She is my adored mother
And every week she sets out
My clothes well ironed
If not my little sister does it
I don't have to spare her
I don't have to order her
Why should I insist
If I can live like this
Without having to work.

Le, lo, le, etc.
I will leave the city
To the country I will go
To see if I can live
In all tranquility
Since happiness is there
Something good will come my way
There I went to make my home
Together with my dear wife
That's how I will spend my life
Without having to work.

Side I, Band 2 - Aguinaldo (in decimas of six-syllable lines).
Luis Marcano and Gilberto Iaza, singers
José Miguel Velez and Francisco Cruz, guitarists, Recorded in Cidra, Puerto Rico, 1967.

The Spanish word Aguinaldo means a Christmas present but also a Christmas song. Moving groups who go from house to house singing carols consider their songs as gift-offerings. But Christmas is the time for the exchange of gifts, and so the household is expected to give something in return—money, food or drink. Such customs are worldwide. In Europe they go back at least to the festival of Saturnalia in Roman times.

In Puerto Rico, the custom of singing aguinaldos is observed everywhere, in cities and mountain towns. In San Juan, the skyscrapers blaze with colored electric lights. At midnight the city is as bright as at noon! In the evening, singers are heard in plazas, in elegant restaurants and poor neighborhood bars. Children wander the streets, singing to passersby, and pluck their sleeve for a present of money.

In the mountains the air is frosty in December. Bands of singers and guitarists wander the hills playing for their friends and families until dawn, drinking body-warming rum, eating delicious meat-filled "pastelillos" or sweet rice pudding cooked in coconut milk.

The aguinaldo on this recording has nothing to do with Christmas yet it is sung during that season. It is a lyric outburst in praise of nature and womankind. Sung in decimas, its musical setting is similar to the first band on this recording. Although not included here, during the recording session in Cidra we recorded a true Puerto Rican "contraversia," an improvised musical and poetic contest. Luis Marcano and his friend Gilberto Iaza improvised an aguinaldo about the nativity, each one taking a turn until the story completely unfolded.

Le, lo, etc.
entre aquel palmar y el cielo
siempre me hacen 2
y a la orilla del río
yo tengo un cafetal
Se escucha al cantar
del que se va
y los trovadores
cantan con destello
y brillar en su cuello, muchacha
un collar de flores

Lo, le, etc.
cubierto en niebla
y allá en colina
yo tengo mi cabaña
el turpial se baña
entre cunondeaoreños
hay ricos colores
de flores sencillas
en tu cuello brillan, muchacha
un collar de flores.

Le, lo, etc.
Con gran voluntad
va la jibarita
lava su ropa
allá en la quebrada
el paisaje está
lleno de fergones
muy ricos las flores
se ven alumbrando
en su cuello, niña
un collar de flores.

Le, lo, etc.
In that palm grove
I also have my hut
And at the river's edge
I have a coffee plantation.
I listen to the song
Of the nightingales
And the troubadours
Sing with brilliance
And on your throat sparkles, little girl
A necklace of flowers

Le, lo, etc.
You see the mountain also
Covered with mist
And there on the hill
I have my cabin
The turpial (bird) bathes
Among the cunondeaoreños (flowers)
There are rich colors
of simple flowers
And on your throat sparkles, little girl
A necklace of flowers

Le, lo, etc.
With great pleasure
Goes the little country girl
She washes her clothes
There in the ravine
The landscape is
Full of fergones (flowers)
Very rich the flowers
They seem to illuminate
On your throat, little girl
A necklace of flowers.

Side I Band 3 - Pasodoble

Pasodoble - This popular Spanish dance, in fast 4/4 time played by a band at the beginning of the bull fight to announce the entrance of los matadores, the bull fighters. It is a lively, almost march-like couple-dance. The uninitiated have only to walk around the dance floor to the rhythm, but the experts weave many fascinating patterns. Unlike Caribbean-flavored couple-dances common to Latin America, the pasodoble is danced, not with undulating torso, but with a proud rigid stance. As a matter of fact, many movements are reminiscent of the characteristic passes of the bull fighter.

In this version from Puerto Rico, the original Spanish exuberance has been mellowed. Melody and words have an air of melancholy that gives way to passionate despair.

Chorus
Oh no, Oh no, Oh no,
For I do not love you
Oh no, Oh no, without you I will not die
Yesterday, in frenzy I gave you my soul
But now is gone, what we gave each other
Oh yes, Oh yes, Oh yes for I loved you-
Oh no, it was not a role I played with you
But, what a sorrow
Now that our love is gone.
What shall we do, if life is not worth living?
The little thing called love.
The little thing called love-
in life, it's like that!

Who has seen a country girl
Dressed in rich fur
Who has seen a boothblack
With crown of marquisite?

Who has seen a lioness
With a bouquet of carnations?
No matter what you want
It is not up to you!
I loved you, you loved me-
You forgot me, I forgot you-
So be and its not worth it
No rhyme or reason for it!

Side I Band 4 - Elena
Luis Marcano, Gilberto Laza, singers.

The plena of Puerto Rico comes from the slum areas of coastal towns and like Calypso is a perfect vehicle for recounting incidents in the daily lives of ordinary people, historical events, social customs, and religious beliefs. More like gossip than news, the comments of the plena are funny, satirical or keenly matter-of-fact.

A combination of Afro-Caribbean and Spanish characteristics, the plena probably made its first appearance late in the nineteenth century. Some old songs are still heard but the plena did not become universally popular or respectable until the 1920's. Many popular composers wrote them but the most important was Manuel A. Jimenez, affectionately called El Canario (The Canary). A long-time resident of New York, he heard his first plena performed there in 1925, in a Puerto Rican neighborhood by a group of young people from Ponce.

Played with full orchestra of guitar, clarinet, guiro, string bass, accordion and tambourine, or by two guitars, as in this disc, the plena is one of the most exciting and joyful dance-songs of the Caribbean. Along the coast the four-line stanza and refrain are broken up into call and response patterns by solo and chorus. In the mountains, at Cidra, the stanza was performed without breaks. When sung in harmony, thirds and sixths predominate.

The subject here deals with the cock fight, the ever-popular amusement of Puerto Rico. The tune was originally used for Cortaron a Elena, a song about a barrio girl of easy virtue.

Chorus
Oh no, Oh no, Oh no, -
For I do not love you
Oh no, Oh no, without you I will not die
Yesterday, in frenzy I gave you my soul
But now is gone, what we gave each other
Oh yes, Oh yes, Oh yes for I loved you-
Oh no, it was not a role I played with you
But, what a sorrow
Now that our love is gone.
What shall we do, if life is not worth living?
The little thing called love.
The little thing called love-
in life, it's like that!

Who has seen a country girl
Dressed in rich fur
Who has seen a boothblack
With crown of marquisite?

Who has seen a lioness
With a bouquet of carnations?
No matter what you want
It is not up to you!
I loved you, you loved me-
You forgot me, I forgot you-
So be and its not worth it
No rhyme or reason for it!

Revel your face
So we may look at each other
For the moment has arrived
To tell you the truth.
You with one and I with another
And to live gracefully.
For life although one wants it
Always has been a carnival.
I loved you, you loved me
You forgot me, I forgot you -
It is not worth being sad
No rhyme or reason for it.
Yo no queres mi gallo
lo que quiero son las espuelas.
Que pica, que pica, pica
los pica piedras de la cantera.

Chorus
They killed my fighting cock, (3)
The stone cutters of the quarry.

They killed my fighting cock (2)
There comes the ambulance -
Sounding its siren!

I don't want my fighting cock (2)
My fighting cock I do not want
What I want are his spurs!

To cut, to cut, to cut (2)
The stone cutters of the quarry.

Side I Band 5 - Plena - La Plena Viene de Cidra.
Luis Marcano and Gilberto Laza,
singers, Recorded in Cidra,

La plena que yo conozco no es de la China ni del Japon
Porque la plena viene de Cidra y es del barrio de Bayamón
Se cansa cualquiera se acaba la vida comiendo marota de almuerzo y comida
Yo sigo adelante cantando canciones presto atenciones que ire más pa' alante.

The plena that I know is not from China or Japan
Because the plena comes from Cidra*
From the barrio of Bayamón

*The original version claimed the city of Ponce as the birthplace of the plena.

Side I Band 6 - Waltz

No European dance form has had the wide distribution of the waltz. Long before it became the smooth, elegant Viennese couple-dance in the early nineteenth century it was a lascivious folk dance of South German peasants. According to eye-witness reports of the time, the women wrapped their huge skirts around their male partners and danced into dark corners of the dance floor and did "lew'd" things!

The waltz became popular throughout Latin America, each country adding its own particular flavor to the original base. First heard in city dance halls and small towns, the waltz reached remote areas where it was performed by Indians on flutes and rustic harps.

The introduction of this Puerto Rican waltz, played by the two guitars in a mixture of three and two beat measures but finally stabilizes into regular 3/4 waltz rhythm. The singer sings his waltz freely.

Adiós, adiós, mis ojos no vuelven a contemplar tu rostro encantador y estas miradas que son recuerdos míos y esa boquita de perfumada flor.
Ya se acabó la vida para mí mis ojos se desvieron de llorar recordarás, ingrata, que yo fui el amante que no te olvidarás.
Yo seguiré llevando con dolor la cruz de mi destino que es tan cruel que venga la muerte y dejaremos de existir a partir de una parole.

Side I Band 7 - Guaracha - La Mujer del Zapatero
Gilberto Laza, singer, recorded in Cidra, Puerto Rico, 1967.

The Guaracha is an old Afro-Cuban street-dance of great melodic and rhythmic charm and vigor. It has long been popular in Puerto Rico among country (jibaro) singers. Like other Caribbean songs such as the habanera and guajira, the guaracha was popular in Spain for a while. Even today they are performed in the villages of Andalusia in Southern Spain.

The guaracha is difficult to define because it takes on many different musical and poetic forms. This tuneful country version is in fast 6/8 alternating occasionally with 3/4.

La mujer del zapatero se llama doña Olivia y si no se hubiera muerto todavía estuviera viva
Hablele así de mi compa' cuidado si le esta mal hablele así de mi compa' cuidado si le esta mal
Ayer me dijo Penuco camino bien perdido la mujer que se enamora algo se trae en manos
Que susto pasó la gata cuando se comió el tocino más susto pasó Rufino corriendo con las batatas.
Rufino se entretenía
con una mujer ajena
y cuando llegó el marido
allí empezó la carrera.
The wife of the shoemaker
Her name was Doña Oliva
And if she had not died
She'd still be alive.

When you talk about my godmother
Take care if she's in bad temper
When you talk about my godfather
Take care if he's in bad temper.

Yesterday Penuco told me
Wandering quite aimlessly
The woman who falls in love
Brings something in her hands.

How scared was the cat
When he ate the bacon
More scared was Rufino
Running with the potatoes
Rufino played around
With someone else's wife
And when her husband arrived
That's when the chase began.

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Side II Band 1 - Bomba Rhythms

An hour from San Juan on the North Shore is the town of Loiza Aldea, the only black town in Puerto Rico, and its barrio Baja and Alta Medianias. A sleepy little town, built among palm groves, each year late in July it comes to life for a week's celebration in honor of Santiago, its patron saint. For this brief period it is crowded with costumed Loizanos, relatives and friends from the United States and other parts of the island. Carnival comes to town with its side shows of magical tricks. Roadside restaurants spring up everywhere, selling beer, fried cakes of banana pulp and meat, crab pones and barbecued meat. Half pageant, half religious fiesta, it celebrates the victory of the Christians over the Moors, or good over evil, a Spanish heritage in the New World.

Santiago is also time for match-making, marriages, and baptisms. Most of all it is a time when Loiza becomes a huge theater where everyone acts out his role in an off-played drama.

The characters in this play are: The Spanish gentlemen, dressed in Conquistadores costumes, brilliant colored pants, capes, dashing hats, and masks of chicken wire. They represent Good and "civilization." The most bizarre of all are the vejigantes, dressed in weird bat-like costumes in riotous colors, with three-horned masks made of coconut husks. They are the Moors, the Devil, or Svil-incarnate. In addition there are lesser characters: Locos (mad men), men dressed as women whose crazy antics are the fun of the festival. Vielcos, too poor to make expensive costumes, they only use masks.

The principal activities of the fiesta are centered on the three religious processions, one for each of the three images of Santiago - for the men, the women and the children. Each day the procession, headed by the statue on a litter, leaves the church in Loiza Aldea and ends on the beach at Alta Medianias followed by horse races. Hundreds of people in costumes line up behind the steel and brass bands, mounted on trucks, and dance down the hot road for the five-mile trip. Behind them come hundreds of cars (formerly decorated ox-carts) honking their horns to the rhythm of the music.

On arrival at Alta Medianias the play acting begins. Children, the locos, stuffed with pillows, and vejigantes speaking in mysterious voices through their masks, go through the town, begging for money, singing songs, telling jokes, acting out their roles.

One of the highlights of the fiesta is the bomba. Every night, often until dawn, Medianias palaces with the hypnotic rhythm of drums, undulating dance and tuneful songs. People of all ages appear from dark coconut groves to form a circle around two drummers, one playing the accompaniments and the lead drummer the repique or improvisation. The drums begin - then a solo dancer steps into the center of the circle, jumping, shaking and twisting his body until thoroughly exhausted, while the villagers sing the traditional verses. Even the youngsters are encouraged to dance and try the drums.

The homemade wooden drums heard here are made of barrels covered with skin-heads. They are tuned and tightened by heating them over a fire. Teenage Freddy and his older brother Raul are members of the most musical and artistic family in Loiza. Everyone sings, dances and plays the drums, even their five-year-old nephew. Every year they perform a theatrical version of the main events of the Santiago festival, at the theater of the Institute of Puerto Rican culture in San Juan. Lately, they have shown it on TV as well. Although Raul goes to the University of Puerto Rico, and his older brother works in television in San Juan, both live in Loiza. They love their town and its traditions, particularly the fiesta and plan to live there the rest of their lives.

Castor Ayala, their fascinating father, is the chief craftsman and mask maker of the village. He is also a painter and sculptor.

The basic rhythm of the improvisation is:

Side II Band 2 - Juba Rhythm

The basic rhythm is:

Side II Band 3 - Recorded during the fiesta of Santiago in Loiza Aldea, Puerto Rico, 1967.

The bomba, where these two songs were recorded was held in la Calle de las Curruces (Street of the Races) where the Santiago processions end and where the horseraces take place. The two drummers played under a huge tree, in the dim light of the nearby street lamp. The songs were sung by a solo voice and answering chorus, the lines repeated in haphazard order.

A. Ven acá, ven acá.

Come here, come here.

B. Meliton, ton be
Se cayo la casa del gallo
ay, el corral de los caballos
Meliton, ton be

The house of the fighting cock fell down
Oh, the corral of the horses.
A. **El Rabo de la Cometa**

Una vieja camisa se levantó
y el rabo de la cometa se la llevó
si la quieres ver
levantate temprano y la verás

An old shirt was lifted up
And the tail of a kite took it away
If you want to see it
Get up early and you will see it.

B. **Dolores**

Dénde está Dolores
para bailar, Dolores
ay, buscamos a Dolores
para bailar, Dolores

Where is Dolores?
Let's dance, Dolores!
Oh, I look for Dolores
Let's dance, Dolores!

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**Side II Band 5 - Recorded by the Parilla Family, Loiza Aldea, Puerto Rico, 1967.**

A. **Ron, Ron**

Ron, ron, pido yo
ánis, anís de corazón
si no hay anís
que venga ron.

Ron, rum I beg of you
Anís, anís de corazón
If there is no anís
Let there be rum.

B. **Aguá Tiré**

Ilegando al puente
aguá tiré
o li, aguá tiré

Arriving at the bridge
I threw in water
Oh, li, I threw in water.

---

**Side II Band 5 - Recorded by Loiza Aldea, sung by Ana Iris Parilla with guiro accompaniment.**

These recordings were made at a Christmas party given by the Parilla family in 1967. It was held in the small house of Ana Iris Parilla and her husband right off the main road of the Medinas section of Loiza. In the tiny living room, members of the family and their friends assembled. There were mountains of fried chicken, rice and beans, (the Puerto Rican staple), and bottles of golden rum.

Good-natured, warm and hospitable, they helped to set up our recording equipment. Singing began, the drums vigorously played, and the guiro (notched stick) sounded full and strong. In a matter of minutes, the house shook with the vibrations. Soon the little room was choked with people and bands of wandering singers joined in from the back yard. Everyone sang carols, love songs, bombas, either alone or with others as the spirit moved them. More rum, more food, more music, more laughter.

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**Side II Band 6 - Recorded by Loiza Aldea.**

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**Side II Band 7 - Piece for Concertina and Drum**

Played by Viviano Pizarro and "Chichito" Cruz Ortiz, drum.

**Side II Band 8 - Mensaje de Alto**

Rondalla del Templo de Mita, Recorded in Hato Rey, (San Juan) Puerto Rico, 1969.

Before the Americas occupied Puerto Rico at the end of the last century the island was, like all of Spanish America, mainly Catholic. Then came many Protestant denominations - Baptist, Methodist, Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostal groups. In 1940 a new religion was born, the only native Puerto Rican church.

The founder of the new religion was a wealthy woman from Arecibo. Her followers called her Mita. Until her death in 1970, Mita was adored by thousands of people. Temples were established in many Puerto Rican cities and in the United States as well - New York, Philadelphia, Washington.

Mita was revered by her congregation as the prophet of the 20th century, as Jesus, and Moses had been in their time. She had a great reputation as a healer, and many miraculous cures are attributed to her. She was a woman of humility, and her concern for her people went beyond their spiritual needs. The Temple was run as a cooperative. Members bought shares in property and businesses of many kinds and investments paid off well.
The big, white Temple in the Hato Rey section of San Juan was always filled with Mita's white-robed followers. Music played an enormous role in the services. Mita herself often picked the popular tunes she liked, and members of the congregation composed new words. At every service there were three bands - brass, strings and a small ensemble of professional musicians. They, like the others, sang and played only the songs of Mita. The small group, The Rondalla, is the one heard on this record. Congregational singing was always highly charged. Some singers would go into trance as they turned around and around near their seats. The followers of Mita, of all ages, are conservative people who do not drink, dance or go to parties. Their pleasure in life stems from their sense of devotion to Mita. Now that she is gone, her disciples carry on her work.

Desesperado y angustiado y en dolor
de lejos vienen llegando hasta aquí
y cuando hacen pacto con Mita
son sanados y se sienten feliz.

Como los tiempos de Noé vino el espíritu
anunciando que viene destrucción
ya se ven los juicios en la tierra,
dentro del arco tendrás la salvación

Chorus

Amigo, ven y gos la voz de Dios
que en este día hablando está
es el mensaje que viene de lo alto
nos están juntando en esta gran ciudad.

As in the time of Noah came the spirit
Announcing the coming of destruction
Already is seen the judgment on earth
Within the Ark will you have salvation.

My friend, come and hear the voice of God -
That on this very day is speaking -
It is the message that comes from above
It is uniting us in this great city

Desperate and anxious and in pain
From afar they come, arriving here
And when they make a pact with Mita
They are cured and feel content.

Notes and translations by Henrietta Yurchenco.

Acknowledgements:

Friends of Old Time Music for use of Nagra recording machine.
Peter and Ellen Hawes of Cidra, Puerto Rico, for their assistance.
Jennifer Sookne for special research.

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