BORICUA ROOTS  RAÍCES BORICUAS
SANDRA ROLDÁN
A Puerto Rican from Brooklyn "Los Sures"
Sings Puerto Rican Songs
On "Boricua Roots"

The title of this album, *Boricua Roots*, does not represent a catchy design in search of sales success. Neither does the collection of songs. Nor has her extraordinary potential turned into a route of splendor. A laborious, at times painful scrutiny has preceded this album. It symbolizes the modest, inwardly gravitating pursuit of a devoted generation in search of dignified anchorage.

The U.S. born Puerto Rican whose parents were truncated from direct cultural ties with the native nation have experienced, perhaps more agonizingly than those parents themselves, a spiritual truncation. The host society of the parents frequently turns out to be inhospitable for their children. The unrewarding urban school, the arrested talent, a limited job market, the ghetto, are phenomena which the New York City born Puerto Ricans face daily in the land in which they were born. A poking into that period of arrest and truncation of their parents becomes, more than crucial, an issue of survival for those who experience the demand for an internal attainment of a grasp of themselves, of their families, of their historical moment. The children of the truncated generation wish to place themselves at that frightening moment and look around and understand, see with their eyes, feel with their hearts and comprehend with their brain the negation of history to which their elders were exposed.

*Boricua Roots* represents such a poking. This album is permeated by an anger, sometimes a questioning melancholy, always by an assertion of pride, a defiance which are perhaps best exemplified in Sandra Roldán's original contributions, the music to the poem of Julia de Burgos entitled "Canción a Alzibú Campos," and in the composition "I Was a Ghetto Child," has the structure of a "seis," a traditional musical form of the Puerto Rican "jibaro" or mountain dweller. Sandra feels pride in identifying her Puerto-Ricanness with that of the indefatigable fighter Alzibú Campos, and in giving "jibaro" form in English to the autobiographical experience as a child from the ghetto, next to her adult advice to be on guard against the opportunistic and superficial folkloric. "Beware of glimmering San Juan and romantic nights with coquis that blind and deafen your minds from the truth and reality."

*Boricua Roots* symbolizes the partial, and the continuing growth of Sandra Roldán's generation; the El Barrio, the Bronx, the East Side, Brooklyn's "los sures" generation. Derouted Puerto Ricans have become aware of their isolation and feel the need to relate historically and culturally to Puerto Rico.

Typically native Puerto Rican folklore songs fill one side of the album, the other contains songs of significant moments of Puerto Rican history. Even in folklore numbers where pure musical enjoyment seems to be the moving force, there's a fierce insistence on exhibiting with pride the U.S. Puerto Rican's Puerto-Ricanness. Such is the case in the selection of the humorous guaracha "El reloj" ("The Watch"). The composer Rafael Hernández was born in Aguadilla, the *boricua* or Puerto Rican hometown of Sandra Roldán's migrant parents. The young talent of the U.S. Puerto Rican shines off in the interpretation of a usually overlooked humorous piece by Puerto Rico's greatest popular lyricist.

The *plena* is traditionally a musical-social Puerto Rican form. It narrates, or tells an incident. But also the combination of elements that make up the *plena* tells us something. Spanish and African elements join rhythmically to remind Puerto Ricans of their healthy mixture of Black and Spanish. The continental Puerto Ricans conscious of the need to defend their Puerto-Ricanness, bring forth with pride the African portion of their personality.

In the title of the album, *Boricua* alludes symbolically to the quantitatively minimal but qualitatively significant *taino*-ness of Puerto Ricans. *Tainos* were the native inhabitants of the island of *Borikén*, land of the brave or proud man, who refused to assimilate. *Borinquen* is the name of Puerto Rico derived from *Borikén*, "La Borinquen*" is the title of Puerto Rico's national anthem, and *Boricua* means Puerto Rican.

Sandra Roldán's powerful voice, molding itself to the folklore and typical forms of Puerto Rican music, in this first album also crops a first discovery, vital in the path toward a necessary definition.

Dr. Ana Luisa Durán
New York, 1976
RAÍCES BORICUA

Sobre "Raíces boricuas"

El título de este álbum, Raíces boricuas, no representa un rótulo en busca de promoción de ventas. No es cartelizativo ni la colección de sus canciones. "Borikén" ha ensayado la cantante su extraordinario potencial en una ruta de espera. Una trabajosa búsqueda, a veces dolorosa, ha precedido la elaboración de este álbum, que simboliza una modesta, centripeta exploración de una generación en pos de digno anclaje.

Nacido en Estados Unidos de padres que fueron separados de su enlace cultural directo con el suelo patrio, el puertorriqueño continental ha sufrido una mutilación espiritual más angustiosa quizás que sus propios padres. La sociedad anfífras de los padres resulta con frecuencia inhospitaria para los hijos de éstos. La desfachatez social urbana, el talento lastimado, un mercado de trabajo espiritual, el ghetto, constituyen la realidad diaria que confronta el puertorriqueño nacido en la ciudad de Nueva York. Un sondeo de la hora de arresto y mutilación de los padres, se convierte más que en problema de un modo, en cuestión de supervivencia. Este puertorriqueño continental siente el reclamo del logro interno de una comprensión de sí mismo, de su familia, de su propio momento histórico. Los hijos de la generación truncada quieren quitarse en el centro de aquella hora terrible, y desde allí arriba alrededor y comprender. Quieren ver con sus ojos, sentir con el corazón, comprender en su cerebro la negación a que sus padres fueron sometidos en su propia historia.

Raíces boricuas representa ese sondeo. Calen el álbum una vez, a veces una inquisitiva nostalgia, siempre una afirmación de orgullo, un desafío, tal vez más evidentes en los aportes originales de Sandra Buldán, la melodia al poema de la poeta Julia de Burgos titulado "Canción a Albizu Campos", y en la composición "I Was a Ghetto Child", en la forma típica musical del jíbaro puertorriqueño, el "selsa". Sandra siente orgullo al reconocer su puertorriqueñía en el increíble luchador Albizu Campos, y en dar estructura jíbara al relato autobiográfico de su niñez en el ghetto, junto a su comprensión de ponerse en guardia ante lo utilitario y superficial folclórico, "el deslumbrante viejo San Juan y noches románticas de coñazos que encuadernan, y adornan la muerte ante la verdadera realidad."

Raíces boricuas representa el crecientísimo parcial y en ascenso de la generación de Sandra Buldán, la "Tina Testi", el jíbaro "El Toro" de Nueva York, la "Tina Testi" de Brooklyn. El puertorriqueño, desarraigado, ha obtenido conciencia de su aislamiento, siente en carne viva la necesidad de allegarse cultural y estrictamente a Puerto Rico.

Una cara del álbum está compuesta por típicas canciones folklóricas puertorriqueñas. La otra cara contiene canciones de momentos de especial interés en la historia de Puerto Rico, como en aquellas piesas folklóricas en que el puco reguetón musical parece ser la intención principal. Se nota una fina sensibilidad del puertorriqueño continental, en exhibir su puertorriqueñía.

En el título del álbum, borikén alude simbólicamente a un elemento étnico de la sociedad puertorriqueña, el latino, cuantitativamente nino y cualitativamente significativo, Los "salsadores" eran los habitantes nativos de la Isla de Borikén, tierra del bravo o aliso hombre, en cuya hazaña no cupo la asimilación. De Borikén deriva Borikén, "La Boriquen" es el título del himno nacional puertorriqueño, y el gentilicio boricua.

La poderosa voz de Sandra Buldán, emolida a las formas folklóricas y típicas puertorriqueñas, en este primer álbum, también acopla un primer hallazgo vital en la ruta hacia una inevitable definición.

Dra. Ana Luisa Durán
Nueva York, 1978

BORICUA ROOTS

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Dr. Ana Luisa Durán
New York, 1978

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MUSIC LP
I Was a Ghetto Child
Words and Music by Sandra Rolón

I was a ghetto child
Born and raised in los sures
Where my parents worked and slaved
To make a half-pass living
And in the hope of moving on
My parents worked so very hard
For my brother and me
Not to feel the same pain
That they had to struggle through

And during those struggling years
We used to visit our abuelito
Who would sing his le lo maim***
About our Island Puerto Rico
But it wasn't 'til later on
That we saw for the first time
The Island abuelito sang about
And mama took us to see
Her hometown of Aguadilla
Aguadilla by the sea

* los sures (Puerto Rican ghetto in Williamsburg, Brooklyn)
** abuelito - grandfather
*** le lo le - improvisational phrase used in Puerto Rican Folklore Music
**** coquis - Native P.R. cricket or small frog like

Notes: The song ends with a warning to us U.S. born Puerto Ricans and the danger of cultural brain wash. In the last verses the song introduces the problem of entrepreneurship culture. In other words, in a neo-colony, culture is not necessarily denied to the colonized. It is converted into a business enterprise that appeals to a sense of nostalgia, romanticism or the need that many of us feel to learn about our roots. Our culture, from our parents, grandparents and so forth and so on, sold to us in various forms.

Verde luz
Antonio Cabán Vale

Verde luz
de monte y mar
Isla virgen de coral
Si me ausento de tus playas rumorosas
Si me alejo de tus palmas silenciosas
Quiero volver
A sentir la tibieza arena
Y perdarme en tus riberas
Isla mía la esclava
Para ti quiero tener
Libre tu cielo
Sola tu estrella
Isla doncella
Quiero tener
Verde luz
De monte y mar

Notes: In Danza form.

El Reloj
Rafael Hernández

El reloj se me paró
Ahora no sé qué hacerme yo pa' tomar la medicina.
Si seré la una
Si serán las dos
A la una y media
Se paró el reloj.

Se paró se paró
Ya no hay quien me lo eche andar
Vida mía
Por favor
Dichame lo a caminar.

Notes: In guaracha form.

The Watch
Rafael Hernández

My watch stopped
And now it won't run at all
I don't know what to do now
To take my medicine on time
Is it one o'clock
Or is it 2 P.M.?
At 1:30 P.M.,
It got stuck

It got stuck, it got stuck
There's no one to make it tick again
Oh baby
Won't you please
Make it tick again for me
Puerto Rican Exodus

Do not keep away from your beaches
Peasant sower
Give the countryside your sweat
and your rustic battles
Think it over don’t leave
To defy your destiny
Associate yourself with your neighbor
Lend a hand to your land
And in your abandoned ground
Plant plant peasant

Already in your beloved land
Everything looks strange (alien)
While you pass the year
In California or Florida
If ever there you give away your life
Giving everything for nothing
Pull up the fandango
That finds the whole world suffering
and instead of being subdued
Return to your machete and hoe

Seis de Andino

Vayan tomando esta nota
Como he podido lochar
Yo he sabido trabajar
Jalando azada y picota
Yo me he puesto hasta unas botas
Que me ha dado algún vecino
y he andado por los caminos
Y no me abochornó a decir
Pordue así lo que es sufrir
Como sufre un campesino.

Los Carreteros

Amance a Amance
Ya se escucha de los jilgueros la alegre diana
Amance a Amance
Y el rocío se va secando sobre la grama
Y las flores van despedazando
Y por la sierra los carreteros
Se ven cantando cantando así

¡Ay! ¡Ay! ¡Ay! se cye el coquí
que va dormir en el guau
Y está pegado al boho
A la orilla del río.

¡Ay! ¡Ay! ¡Ay! te loito el café
Y se pavado
Y todo fue que el mísaro
Lo ha deshecho por no ponerle un mísaro.

Qué lindo es cuando amance
Y qué linda es la mañana
Dios te bendiga mil veces
Oh mi tierra borinquen.

¡Ay! ¡Ay! ¡Ay! Ya amancicó
El sol brilló
Y se limado así
Ya estamos en pleno día
Ya todo es luz y alegría.

Qué lindo es cuando amance
Y qué linda es la mañana
Dios te bendiga mil veces
Oh mi tierra borinquen.

Seis de Andino

Vayan tomando esta nota
Como he podido lochar
Yo he sabido trabajar
Jalando azada y picota
Yo me he puesto hasta unas botas
Que me ha dado algún vecino
y he andado por los caminos
Y no me abochornó a decir
Pordue así lo que es sufrir
Como sufre un campesino.

Puerto Rico es un tesoro
El más pulido valor
Que se parece una flor
Con sus pétalos de oro
Hasta en el canto sonoro
De un pajarito en el rama
Cuando ya encebrada llama
El alto reg res saluda
Digo sin lugar a dudas
Mi patria merece fama

Seis de Andino

Anonymous

Please take notice of what I am going to say
I have struggled hard
I have worked hard
Bent over pick-axe and hoe
I have even worn a pair of boots
Given to me by my neighbor
And I have walked through all paths
And I am not ashamed to admit it
Because I know well what suffering is
Pecant suffering.

Puerto Rico is a treasure
A polished jewel
Like a flower she is
With golden petals
And at the sonorous song
Of a bird on a branch
When with its shiny glitter
The King of light greets us
I reaffirm:
My fatherland deserves renown
La yautía es una mata
Que cuando reloje empieza
A descubrir la belleza
De la posseión más grata
Faremos buscar la plata
De este país en ruinas
Es de aquí no se vergüenza
Y pérale a este país
Y en esta noche feliz
Soy jíbaro campesino.

Notes: "Seis de Andino" is a folkloric song depicting the "jíbaro", the peasant worker, who comes from the mountains or rural areas of Puerto Rico. Due to heavy industrialization in Puerto Rico, the jíbaro is quickly disappearing. In this song the jíbaro sings about how hard he has worked the land. He sings to his Island Puerto Rico and calls it a golden flower, among other praises. He talks about the plant "yautía" which is a native root vegetable and finally about his pride of being a peasant jíbaro.

Que se va José

Lo ve lo ve lo ve Lola
Que se va José
Lo ve lo ve lo ve Lola
Como ya se fue.
Coro

José is leaving

You see, you see, you see Lola
José is leaving
You see, you see, you see Lola
He already left.
Chorus

You used to tell me
That you loved me
You didn't love me at all
Listen

You did it all the work
You just supervised
You didn't love me at all
Listen

You used to fight with me
and kept on fighting
Just to keep me tied down to you
Listen

Now you can cry over me
Now go ahead and love me
'Cause now I don't love you
Listen

You see, you see, you see Lola
José is leaving
You see, you see, you see Lola
He already left
José has left

Notes: "Que se va José" is in Plena form.

Canzión a Albizu Campos
Julia de Burgos (poet)
Sandra Roldán (music)

De corazón a labio
De norte a sur y a estrella
Los montes y los niños y el aire
te saludan.

(Chorus)

Príncipe del imperio de las constelaciones
Donde comienzan el alma a iniciarse la idea
Debrudador del cielo verdadero y presente
Por donde el mundo mira la tierra horripicable.

(Chorus)

Toda en ti se adelanta en magnitud de símbolo
Desde Atlanta hasta el hoy eterno de tu ofrenda
Porque tu fuiste todo de amor a Puerto Rico
Y todo, de amor patrio, a lo eterno regresar.

(Chorus)

A tu nombre canción en la boca de un río
Relámpago antillano, cabalgando la tierra
Amapola de América dibujada en mil pétalos
Universo recitado al alma horripicable.

De corazón a labio
De norte a sur y a estrella
Los montes y los niños y el aire
te saludan.

Notes: "Canzión a Albizu Campos" is a poem written by Puerto Rican poet Julia de Burgos, whose life itself was quite tragic. Sandra Roldán composed the music. Pedro Albizu Campos is known in our Puerto Rican history as "The Maestro" meaning "The Messiah" because he educated generations in the 20th Century about our rights. He became the President of the Nationalist Party during the 1950's in Puerto Rico and remained the Party leader until his death, which occurred in 1965, a few months after he was released into the hands of a medical doctor, because the taken government in Puerto Rico did not wish to face the embarrassment of having P.R.'s greatest independentista leader die in jail. Pedro Albizu Campos led a vigorous struggle for independence. Because he was seen as a constant threat to U.S. domination, he was jailed for more than 20 years in the state penitentiary of Atlanta, Georgia on a charge of conspiracy to overthrow the government of the U.S. Later he was transferred to a jail in Puerto Rico. Other nationalists are still held as political prisoners here in the U.S. from the early 1950's. They are the longest held political prisoners in the whole western Hemisphere. Their names are: Lollita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irving Flores, Oscar Collazo, Andrés Figueroa Cordero was let out of prison last year. He suffers from terminal cancer.

A Song to Albizu Campos
(Verse by Julia de Burgos)
(Music by Sandra Roldán)

From our hearts to our lips
From north to south, thru the stars
Our mountains and our children
And our air greet you.

Príncipe del imperio de las constelaciones
Donde comienzan el alma a iniciarse la idea
Debrudador del cielo verdadero y presente
Por donde el mundo mira la tierra horripicable.

(Chorus)

Everything inside thee is far ahead in
magnitud and symbol.
From Atlanta to the present of thy offering
down to the present.
For you gave yourself completely, all your
love to Puerto Rico.
And all of you, for the love of your
people, returns to eternity.

(Chorus)

To you song at the birth of a river
Antillean lightning, evading over the
land.
Passion flower of America burst in myriad
petals.

Universe devoted to Borinquen.

From our heart to our lips
From north to south, thru the stars
Our mountains and our children
And our air greet you.

From our hearts to our lips
From north to south, thru the stars
Our mountains and our children
And our air greet you.
Culebra a a (Coro)

Una iglesia en la arena levantó
Una iglesia en la arena levantó
Las alambradas traspasando
A la marina arrodi’llo - Culebra a a

Culebra es parte de Borinquen bella
Culebra es parte de Borinquen bella
Coro
Que a la marina arrodi’llo

A los yanquis y a los marines
A cortar sus famas obligo
Las alambradas traspasando
A la marina arrodi’llo - Culebra a a

Coro

Levántase sola en el mar
A los yanquis desafío
Y con solo culebras
A la marina arrodi’llo - Culebra a a

Coro

Notes: Argentinian folklorist, Suni Pas, who is also a poet-composer, wrote "Culebra." Culebra is a small island which is part of P.R., and is off the east coast of the island. The U.S.海军 used this island of about 1000 inhabitants as a target practice. The businesses and lives of Puerto Ricans in Culebra were placed in serious danger. There have been fatal and serious incidents. Finally, after so many years of protesting this brutality, the U.S. Navy took up another target site which is another part of Puerto Rico, another small island also off the east coast of P.R., south of Culebra. The name of this new target site is Vieques.

Song to Culebra
Suni Pas

Culebra island of fishermen
Bombarded you were drying away in the sun
But your people tired of suffering
Challenged the marines
Culebra a a (Chorus)

They built a church in the sand (2x)
"Trespassing!" the electric wire fences
They forced the marines to go on their knees
Culebra a a

Coro

Culebra is part of beautiful Borinquen
Culebra is part of beautiful Borinquen
Culebra is part of beautiful Borinquen
Who made the marines go on its knees
(Chorus)

It forced the yankees and the marines
To cut down their tasks
When the wire fences were "Trespassed"
It made the marines go on its knees
Culebra a a (repeat chorus)

Coro

Rising alone in the sea
It challenged the yankees
And by just "Culebra"
It made the marines go on its knees
(repeat chorus)

Coro

Notes: The "Le Lo Lai" is in the folklore form of an Agüinaldo, which is the typical form of expression of the Puerto Rican peasant or jíbaro. Just as, due to the heavy industrialisation of Puerto Rico, which does not respond to the basic needs of Puerto Rican economy, the jíbaro is disappearing, so is his music. And this song depicts precisely that problem. The song says that if a Puerto Rican wants to make it as a singer in Puerto Rico, one must first learn how to sing foreign songs or American rock songs in order to cater to the tourist. Our "Le Lo Lai" (which is a Puerto Rican improvisational phrase) has been dragged through the ground. It also says that if we want to eat, we have to eat outside or imported products. This refers to the problem existing in Puerto Rico of agriculture having been abandoned in favor of heavy industrialisation. Puerto Rico is the fourth largest world market of the United States.

Le Lo Lai

Pepe Castillo

Si usted quiere ser cantante
Tiene que aprender primero (2x)

A cantar esos cantares
Que vienen del extranjero
Porque nuestro Le Lo Lai caballero
Rueda por el suelo
Le Lo Lai
Le Lo Lai (Coro)
Le Lo Lai....
Rueda por el suelo

Si usted quiere alimentarse
Tiene que aprender primero (2x)

A comprar esos productos
Que vienen del extranjero
Porque nuestra producción caballero
Rueda por el suelo
Le Lo Lai etc. (Coro)

Y en la Navidad
El cuatro es muy bueno (2x)
Pasa Navidad
Descansa en el suelo
Porque nuestro Le Lo Lai caballero
Rueda por el suelo
Le Lo Lai etc. (Coro)

Para terminar
Yo quiero aclarar (2x)
Que esto que tocamos
No es de navidad
Que es música nuestra
Y la tenemos que sonar
Le Lo Lai etc. (Coro)

Notes: For Christmas time
The "Cústros" is very good.
Christmas is over
It rests useless in the corner
For our Le Lo Lai, gentle audience
Is dragged on the ground

Upon taking farewell, I wish to clarify
That this is our playing
Is no Christmas treat
It is our music
And we got to make it sound

Le Lo Lai .......
Its dragged on the ground

*("Cústros" is typical P.R. guitar)
Antonia

Tu nombre tiene la esencia de la historia
De un pueblo que se busca
y se ha encontrado en ti.
Antonia

Tus pájaros desatan
La luz del porvenir
Antonio los pueblos no perdonan
Un día esta ley
Se ha de cumplir.

Aquello que un día derramaron
Tus péntoles de sangre
No sabían que así
Rocaban las semillas
en el aire
Y a la vista del pueblo
Nababan de surgir
Ay Antonio los pueblos no perdonan
un día esta ley
Se ha de cumplir.

Tu muerte
La juventud la canta,
es bandera en sus labios
y es bala de fusil
Antonia acáp estás presentes
Para mostrarte el mundo
La luz que nace en ti.

Notes: "Antonia" is in a bolero-guaracha form, composed by Puerto Rican post-composer Antonio Cabán Vale, known by his nickname "El Topo". "Antonia" is a song about a student from the University of Puerto Rico by the name of Antonio Martínez Laguer, who was killed by the police during a student demonstration where she was only an innocent bystander. This happened on March 6, 1970. The problem illustrated here is police brutality.

Despierta Boriqua

Francisco Matos Paoli (Letra)
Guariñez Hidalgo Africano (Música)

Oye boriqua yo te canto esta canción
Viva la patria viva la Revolución (2x)
Coro

Montaña montaña más
Montaña más tan activa y tan tallada
Y en la potente mirada
Ay la mirada que tronchó la tiranía
Y en tu limpidez un día
Ay un día cruzó el alma un lucero
Que trazó en derrotero
Su derrotero que en la sangre arremete

Con el filo del machete
Ay del machete que alzó Manolo al laercio
Coro

Lares significa el paso
Ay el paso que dimos en la alborada
Cuando aquella madrugada
Ay madrugada empuñamos el negro lazo
Lares también es sarpazo
Ay es sarpazo que al invasor clavaremos
Cuando a este pueblo le eschemos
Giga le eschemos sangre de nuestra pasión
y nos gríe el corazón

El corazón patria o muerte venceremos
Coro

Béstecs me está llamando
me está llamando y ya Luis Belvis me hace señas
Manolo prende la leña
Oye la leña y Bruckman
Ya Marianas está bordando
Está bordando bandera en mis cafetales
Ya por todos los lugares
Ay los lugares se acerca un pueblo que grita
"Coño despierta boriqua"
Oye boriqua y ven a buscarme a Lares"

Notes: "Despierta Boriqua" is a poem written by Francisco Matos Paoli, a Puerto Rican poet. The music was composed by Guariñez Hidalgo Africano. Francisco Matos Paoli was a Professor of literature at the University of Puerto Rico, he was punished for being an Independentista, and was sent to jail, where he had a nervous breakdown. His nerves suffered, but not his will power, or the understanding of the Puerto Rican experience. Matos Paoli, considered "personas non grata" by the colonial authorities or lackeys, was denied a means of making a living in Puerto Rico, he was removed from his university teaching. But Matos Paoli has kept up his writings and his teaching. He is one of the greatest world poets of all time. The poem "Despierta Boriqua" is a call to arms to Puerto Ricans. And at the same time it is a recount of those moments and personalities in Puerto Rican history that still stand as evidence of Puerto Rican non acceptance of colonialisation, of Puerto Rican fights and struggles for self determination. Thus, this song deals with the one problem from which all other major problems derive, COLONIALIZATION.