

# Ritmo y Cultura

A Newsletter by Puerto Rican Folkloric  
Dance & Cultural Center

Fall 2002

Volume 1, Issue 1

## Saludos from the Founding Director



Saludos and welcome to our Cultural Center's first Newsletter! Our PRFDance Familia is a joyful community bringing a unique slice of Hispanic culture to Austin. We are a vibrant and growing institution giving visibility to Austin by offering one of the few authentic, high-quality and nationally-awarded educational and performance programs in Puerto Rican traditional arts and culture in the country.

This year marks our 5th anniversary! The seeds were planted in January 1997 when I volunteered to help represent Puerto Rico at the Austin Ethnic Fair. From behind a table decorated with cultural treasures from home - percussion instruments, a traditional costume, a pava (straw hat), and more - I watched the stage that day as our City's cultural groups presented

their homeland folklore. As I looked down at my 6 month old son laying in his carriage, I had the sad realization that he would never know the joyful culture that filled my childhood. It was that day I promised to create something that would bring this culture alive for him, and for Austin.

Today, the Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance & Cultural Center is an all-volunteer, nonprofit 501(C)(3). It is one of the few in the country offering a professional-level performing company, as well as ongoing programs dedicated to the full cross-section of traditional dance, music, and culture to children through adults, beginner through professional-level. Although our Center is currently without a physical location, the high-quality of our programs is recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Commission on the Arts, the Austin Arts Commission, and the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture.

The Austin community has been enthusiastically supporting PRFDance informally for years, attending our performances, participating in our programs. Our new PRFDance Familia program gives our community the means to demonstrate and formalize their strong commitment to the cultural education we are bringing to Austin. With rich programs underway, we are looking to the horizon and are setting sail to build a physical home for our cultural center—a place where students of all ages and backgrounds can come, not only to receive world-class education, but to discover and celebrate their identity, to become connected to a community, to be inspired by role models and mentors, to find a sense of pride and a dream for the future. Thank you for joining our family! Together we will build a legacy for our city, ourselves, and our children!

Con cariño, su servidora – Dra. Ana Maria Maynard, Founding Director

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**AUDITIONS!** We are holding auditions for the 2002/2003 Student and Professional Music Programs, and Entry-Level Dance Apprentices. PRFDance presents traditional music and folk dances from Puerto Rico, such as Bomba, Plena, Seis and Danza for artistic and cultural events in the Austin community throughout the year. Music auditions will be taken for the following acoustic instruments: strings, brass, woodwinds, piano, voice. Dance auditions are for male & female positions. All auditions are by appointment and will include an interview and demonstration of talent/level. For more information, or to schedule your audition contact, Ana Maria Maynard, (512) 251-8122 or [dance@prfdance.org](mailto:dance@prfdance.org). See our website [www.prfdance.org](http://www.prfdance.org) for more information about the programs offered by PRFDance!

## Inside Dance By Jennifer Rush



The PRFDance fall session is in full swing, and we are swinging to a bomba beat! Bomba music and dance flourished around the coastal towns of Puerto Rico, wherever West Africans and their descendents lived and worked the colonial plantations. Originally, *bailes de bomba* provided an important social, spiritual, and political outlet for the enslaved Africans. Don Rafael Cepeda, the "patriarch of bomba," states "The *baile de bomba* was the people's response to the aristocratic music of the Puerto Rican plantation owner." (*Puerto Rico in Washington*, CD Liner, Smithsonian Folkway, 1989)

The Children and Teen/Pre-Teen classes began the semester with an introduction to bomba, the most African-influenced style found in Puerto Rican folkloric music and dance. The students are learning Sicá, one of several rhythms of Puerto Rican bomba. Each class session begins with a cultural lesson on the history of the dance or on other aspects of Puerto Rican culture. The classes are often treated to live music courtesy of the PRFDance musicians, playing on authentic bomba drums, called *barriles*.

The Adult class also began the semester learning the basics of bomba. Like the Children and Teen classes, the adult students are learning to approach the lead drum and improvise a short solo. The lead drummer, or *primo*, watches the solo dancer carefully so that he can answer the dancer's every move with his drum. This challenge between the dancer and the drummer forms a very special rhythmic communication. Holandés is another bomba rhythm that the Adult class has learned this semester, and, as is evident by its name, has roots tracing back to Holland (via the Dutch-colonized Caribbean isles). This rhythm is much faster than Sicá; the dance is very energetic and has more difficult dance steps.

In addition to bomba, all the classes are each learning a contemporary dance in styles that are popular today. This is a great way to experience first hand how music and dance have evolved over generations. The Children's class is learning a dance to a song by Melody, the Spanish child pop singer who is a current favorite of children in Puerto Rico. The Teen class is

(Continued on page 5)



## Inside Music By Jennifer Rush

2002 is another landmark year for PRFDance with the launch of a formal music program. The **Student Music Program** teaches traditional and popular Puerto Rican compositions to those demonstrating a proficiency in instrument or voice; it is geared towards students, intermediate through pre-professional level (children through adult), already taking formal classes in their instrument. The **Professional Music Circle** is made up of advanced to professional-level musicians, including percussionists and singers, who focus on traditional and popular Puerto Rican compositions and authentic orchestration. Both semester-long programs culminate in a recital with the dance programs.

The excitement didn't end there for 2002. The PRFDance Performing Company musicians had the opportunity to collaborate with world-renowned Plena masters *Los Pleneros de la 21*, led by National Endowment Heritage Fellow Juan Gutierrez. PRFDance musicians spent 3 evenings of intensive workshops with the visiting artists in preparation for our biggest show of the year, *Celebrando 2002*. Experiences such as these are hugely enriching to the Center's programs on many levels. For example, since the *Celebrando* show, the Performing Company has performed for the first time a complete suite of Plena dances to live music played by our very own Music Ensemble!



In addition to accompanying the dancers, the professional company musicians are spotlighted in each show with special music performances. The heart and skill displayed in each song is evident, whether in a traditional Jibaro song from the mountains to the Depression-era classic "Lamento Borincano." Keep your ears and eyes open for more to come from this talented group.

## Mulata-Antilla

Por Luis Palés Matos

En tí ahora, mulata,  
Me acojo al tibio mar de las antillas.  
Agua sensual y lenta de melaza,  
Puerto de azúcar, cálida bahía,  
Con la luz en reposo  
Dorando la onda limpia,  
Y el soñoliento zumbo de colmena  
Que cuajan los trajines de la orilla.

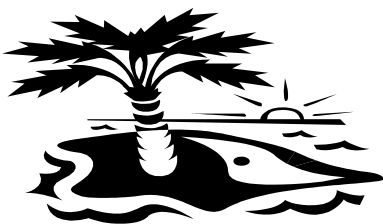
En tí ahora, mulata,  
Cruzo el mar de las islas.  
Eléctricos mininos de huracanes  
En tus curvas se alargan y se ovillan,  
Mientras sobre mi barca va cayendo  
La noche de tus ojos, como tinta.

En tí ahora, mulata...  
¡Oh despertar glorioso en las antillas!  
Bravo color que el do de pecho  
alcanza,  
Música al rojo vivo de alegría,  
Y calientes cantaridas de aroma  
-Limón, tabaco, piña--  
Zumbando a los sentidos  
Sus embriagadas voces de delicia.

Eres ahora, mulata,  
Todo el mar y la tierra de mis islas.  
Sinfonía frutal, cuyas escalas,  
Rompen furiosamente en tu catina.  
He aquí en su traje verde la guanábana  
Con sus finas y blandas pantaletas  
De muselina; he aquí el caimito  
Con su leche infantil; he aquí la piña  
Con su corona de soprano...Todos  
Los frutos, oh mulata! tu me brindas  
En la clara bahía de tu cuerpo  
Por los soles del trópico bruñida.

¡Oh, Cuba! ¡Oh, Puerto Rico!  
Fogosas tierras líricas...  
¡Oh, los rones calientes de Jamaica!  
¡Oh, el aguacate de Santo Domingo,  
Y el caldo denso de la Martinica!

Ahora eres, mulata,  
Glorioso despertar en mis Antillas.



## Teacher Rafael Cordero Molina

Por Luis R. Negrón Hernández

Translation by Ann Shelvin

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**RAFAEL CORDERO MOLINA** was born on October 24, 1790. He was unable to attend school because, at the time, Black children were not allowed to enroll.

In spite of his poverty and the racial obstacles of the times, Rafael's parents, Lucas Cordero and Rita Molina, were a well-educated couple who loved reading and knowledge. They instilled in little Rafael's intellect a great desire to know more about the world, and, further, to transmit this interest to others. In a short time, Rafael became a well-educated young man, ready to work as teacher of elementary subjects.

In 1810, while living in San Germán, Rafael Cordero opened his first little school for Black and Mulatto boys in his own home. His sister later did the same for girls, as instruction at the time was given separately.

The family returned to San Juan, where Master Cordero set out to offer free schooling to poor children without regard to their race or social status, in his home on Luna Street. To support himself, he worked as a shoemaker and cigar maker.

Rafael Cordero's fame spread beyond his poor little neighborhood. Families began to send their children to his home school. There, his students learned to read rapidly and correctly, to the surprise of many. He taught them all reading, grammar, history, handwriting, geography, arithmetic and Christian doctrine.

Among his students were the future abolitionist, Jose Julian Acosta y Calbo; Román Baldorioty de Castro, who was also to become an abolitionist and a leader in the fight for autonomy; Manuel Elizaburu y Vizcarrondo, who would later found the Athenaeum of Puerto Rico and become a great writer, lawyer, and a leader in the Liberal Party; Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, considered the "father of Puerto Rican literature"; as well as others who understood what it meant to honor Puerto Rico and their Black teacher, defending all Puerto Ricans, especially the slaves, the poor, and those who treasured their Puerto Rican identity.

The Economic Society of Friends of Puerto Rico awarded Rafael Cordero a prize of 100 pesos. Master Cordero invested the money in his students and gave alms to the beggars of San Juan. In his old age, the government granted him a small pension of 15 pesos a month.

This outstanding Boricua died on July 5, 1868, in his native San Juan.

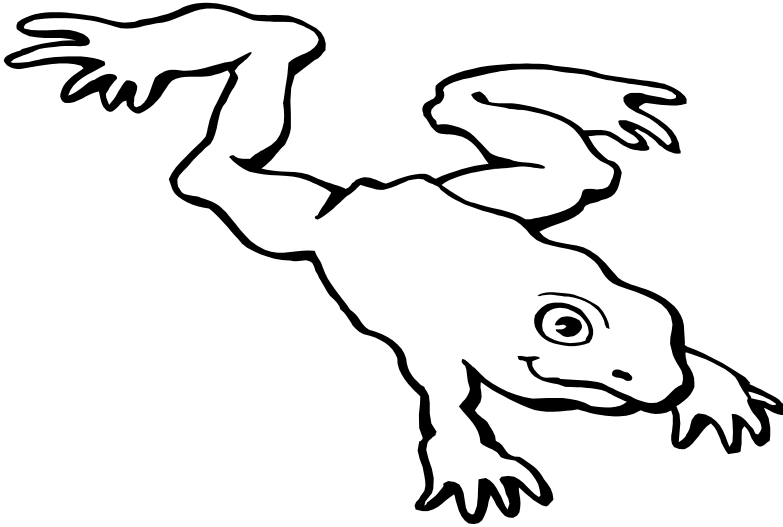
## A Note from the Editors...

Welcome to the first edition of *Ritmo y Cultura*! We hope you enjoy this newsletter as much as we enjoy putting it together. If you would like to contribute with an original article, poem, or recipe, please contact us at [newsletter@prfdance.org](mailto:newsletter@prfdance.org).

Brenda A. Acosta  
Jennifer Rush

# El Rincón del Coqui

By Brenda A. Acosta



Find some of the words we inherit from our African roots:

Yautia	Ñame	Gandules
Bomba	Batata	Gandinga
Plena	Bochinche	Malanga

## Sopa de Letras

A L M N M A L A N G A  
 H R P S W O K P F A G  
 B K U M A S P L E N A  
 A U T K F I N B L D N  
 A Y A U T I A C K U D  
 T Ñ M B E S Y H A L I  
 A S L O A T N E M E N  
 T Z R M H E E C T S G  
 A I T B J U A M N O A  
 B O D A W P U R A A N  
 E H C N I H C O B Ñ S

## A que no Adivinas...

*Adivinanzas* are rhymes in the form of a riddle in which you have to guess what we are talking about. Can you guess what these are about?

Sin ser faro ni roca  
 En medio del mar estoy,  
 Tambien estoy en la playa:  
 ¡Adivinen, pues, quién soy!

I'm not a lighthouse or a rock,  
 But I live at the end of the sea,  
 You'll also find me in the sand,  
 Now guess who I might be  
 (a)

En el aire anda,  
 En el aire mora,  
 En el aire teje  
 La trabajadora  
 (La araña)

In the air I play,  
 In the air I lurk,  
 In the air I wave,  
 In the air I work  
 (the spider)

A pesar de tener patas,  
 Yo no me puedo mover,  
 Llevo la comida encima  
 Y no la puedo comer.  
 (la mesa)

Although I have my legs,  
 I cannot move an inch.  
 Food that I can carry  
 I cannot even pinch  
 (the table)

Reference:  
 Canciones de cuna, trabalenguas y adivinanzas de Suramerica  
 Las Nanas de Abuelita  
 Compiled by Nelly Palacio Jaramillo

“El coqui, el coqui a mi me encanta  
 es tan suave el cantar del coqui  
 por las noches tranquilo me duermo  
 Con el dulce cantar del coqui “



(Inside Dance, continued from page 2)

learning a salsa dance to an energetic song by world famous pop icon Ricky Martin; and the Adult class is learning to Cha-Cha to a song written by "El Rey" Tito Puente. The students had the pleasure of learning some new moves from guest instructor Stewart Yaros of Dance International.

All students will have a chance to showcase what they have learned this semester at *Sembrando Herencia 2002*. This annual performance of the Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance & Cultural Center will be held at Concordia University on Saturday, December 7, at 7:30pm. The children, teen, adult students, and PRFDance performing company, will be joined by *Coro de la Escuela Libre de Música*, direct from Puerto Rico. Please join us at *Sembrando Herencia* and enjoy a very special evening of Puerto Rican music and dance.

## Contributions to Puerto Rican Culture by Our West African Roots

by Orlando Cordero  
 "A Jibaro de Utuado" in Waco, Texas  
 Orlando\_Cordero@ISL-3Com.com

When I am at home visiting, and I hear some gossip about me or my friends, that's known as a *bochinche*. For someone who likes to talk a lot, we say that he or she likes to *bembetear*. For lunch I like to eat *ñame*, *batata*, *yautía* and *malanga*. For dinner I enjoy *mofongo*. My dad likes to eat *gandinga*, while I prefer *mondongo* or *sancocho*. During Christmas season, it is a tradition to prepare rice with *gandules*. A spoiled child is known as a *ñoño* (for a girl, *ñoña*). A *fufu* is known as a spell, or it is said to someone who thinks he/she is better than others, like: She thinks she has a lot of *fufu*. A good party is known as a *bachata*, especially if the music is accompanied with a *conga*. It is even better if the music is *bomba* or *plena*. A person who is happy and likes to dance or party is known as a *sanduguero*. A mix of something that may be hard to sort out is a *burundanga*. While sometimes, to relax, I like to hike in the *jungla*.

These are just an example of everyday African words used in Puerto Rican Spanish. Not knowing them may cause you to go hungry, among other things.

P.S. Someone from Central or South America may not have a clue about the meaning of these words. These words are part of the Spanish language in the Caribbean. My wife is from Peru and has never heard about them until she met me. Now she uses a lot of them in her everyday language.

## Sancocho

What better way to welcome the wintertime than with this hearty soup!

- A — 3 quarts (12 cups) water  
 1 tablespoon salt  
 1 onion, peeled \* \* coarsely chopped  
 2 tomatoes \*  
 1 green pepper, seeded \*  
 1 sweet chili pepper, seeded \*  
 3 fresh cilantro leaves \*  
 2 fresh corn kernels, halved
- B — 1 pound lean beef  
 ½ pound lean pork with bone
- C — next 6 peeled & diced  
 ½ pound white yautía  
 ½ pound yellow yautía  
 ½ pumpkin or squash  
 ½ pound potatoes  
 ½ pound ñame  
 ½ pound sweet potatoes
- D — next 2 peeled & quartered  
 1 large green plantain  
 1 large ripe plantain
- E — 1 tablespoon salt  
 ½ cup tomato sauce
- 1) In a large, 12-quart kettle, combine ingredients included in A. Bring *rapidly* to a boil.
  - 2) Clean and wash meats. Cut into 1-inch cubes. Add meats and bone to kettle. *Cover*, reduce heat to *moderate*, and cook for 1 hour.
  - 3) Wash vegetables included in C and add to kettle.
  - 4) Rinse green plantain *rapidly* in *salted* water. Drain and add to kettle, together with ripe plantain.
  - 5) Add salt and tomato sauce and bring *rapidly* to a boil. *Cover*, and cook over *moderate* heat for 45 minutes.
  - 6) *Uncover*, remove pieces of green plantain, mash, turn, into balls, and add to kettle. Boil *rapidly* for 1 minute.

Serves 8

From *Puerto Rican Cookery (Cocina Criolla)* by Carmen Aboy Valldejuli  
 © 1977, 1980

## Café Con Libros . . . A Recommended Reading

### ***Boricuas: Influential Puerto Rican Writings - An Anthology***

Edited by Roberto Santiago  
Published by Ballantine Books  
1995



"From the sun-drenched beaches of a beautiful, flamboyant-covered island to the cool, hard pavement of the fierce South Bronx, the remarkable journey of the Puerto Rican people is a rich story full of daring defiance, courageous strength, fierce passions, and dangerous politics-and it is a story that continues to be told today." (Back Cover)

*Boricuas* is a rich and beautiful collection of works of the past century from forty writers, who express as many viewpoints of the Puerto Rican experience, both on the island and in the United States. The selections are nicely organized by relevant themes and displayed in a wide variety of forms, including poetry, fiction, plays, essays, monologues, screenplays, and speeches. Contributors include Julia de Burgos, Piri Thomas, José De Diego, Esmeralda Santiago, Freddie Prinze, Pedro Albizu Campos, Victor Hernández Cruz, Geraldo Rivera, Nicholasa Mohr, Luis Muñoz Marín, Ana Lydia Vega, and many more.

"Captures the vitality and diversity of the Puerto Rican experience in a way that both educates and inspires...*Boricuas* is sure to become a required introduction for those interested in exploring the meaning of being Puerto Rican and the dynamics of race and ethnicity today." –Angelo Falcon, Institute for Puerto Rican Policy

"For those looking for the depth and texture of what it means to be 'Boricua,' this is a must read." –Juan A. Figueroa, Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund

### *Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance*

2002/2003 Educational Programs

**THE NEXT SEMESTER BEGINS JANUARY 11, 2003**

Children's Program–Saturdays at 10:00am

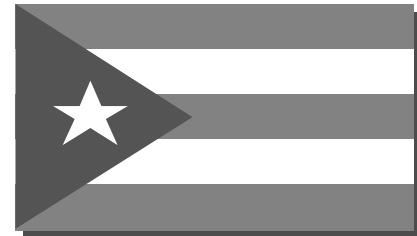
Teen/Pre-Teen Program–Saturdays at 11:00am

Adult Program–Mondays at 7:00pm

Student & Professional Music Program–Thursdays at 7:00pm

Bilingual programs will teach traditional music, dance, history, culture, games and songs. Joyful, challenging class teaches traditional dances such as *bomba*, *plena*, *seis* and *danza* and their cultural and historical significance.

Dance classes are held at the Tapestry Dance Studio, 507B Pressler Street in downtown Austin, between MOPAC and Lamar off 5th street. For more information, visit [www.prfdance.org](http://www.prfdance.org) or call 251-8122.



## *Refranes...*

### **Fue peor el remedio que la enfermedad.**

When trying to solve a problem, the apparent solution makes it worse.

### **Al buen entendedor con pocas palabras basta.**

A good listener and observer does not need a big explanation to get the picture.

### **Lo prometido es deuda.**

Honor your promises.

### **Del agua mansa libreme Dios, que de la brava me libro yo.**

Beware of situations or persons that seem to good to be true .

Reference:

Refranes mas usados en Puerto Rico  
Maria Elisa Diaz Rivera

## Become a Member of the Family!!!



Join the "PRFDance Familia" and make it possible to offer weekly classes on traditional dance, music, culture and history. Sponsor performances, costumes, props, and instruments. You can even sponsor student scholarships! We are an all volunteer, nonprofit 501(C)(3) organization. Your donation is tax deductible and every dollar directly supports the mission! JOIN DIRECTLY (mail a check with your address/phone) or through your company's UNITED WAY program.

**As a member of the PRFDance Familia, you will receive many exclusive benefits according to your contribution level.**

<u>Level</u>	<u>Contribution</u>	<u>Benefits</u>
<b>Coquis</b> (12 and under)	<b>\$15</b>	Coqui membership souvenir, name listing in full length performance program, acknowledgement during the show.
<b>Amigos</b>	<b>\$25 and higher</b>	Subscription to our newsletter, special email announcements through the year, invitation to our Open House, and name recognition in full-length performance program.
<b>Tíos</b>	<b>\$100 and higher</b>	Above plus, early ticket purchasing privileges for the <i>Celebrando</i> performance, invitation to observe a PRFDance performing arts class, a one-day pass to participate in the class.
<b>Hermanos</b>	<b>\$250 and higher</b>	Above plus, PRFDance T-shirt or tote, invitation each semester to observe a PRFDance performing arts class, invitation to observe a studio rehearsal.
<b>Padres</b>	<b>\$500 and higher</b>	Above plus, invitations each semester to observe the Performing Company at a PRFDance studio rehearsal, the final studio rehearsal of our annual performing arts recital, and our private, season-ending recital.
<b>Padrinos</b>	<b>\$1,000 and higher</b>	Above plus, unlimited access to observe studio rehearsals, special back stage tour, prominent recognition with name listing in our full-length performance program.
<b>Angelitos</b>	<b>\$5,000 and higher</b>	Above plus, invitation to all dress rehearsals, 2 complimentary tickets to <i>Celebrando</i> , invitation to cast party, name recognition on full-length program and during the show.

## Volunteer Opportunities

If you have a talent and would like to become part of this wonderful PRFDance family, we have a place for you! Contact us and let us know what you have fun doing -- no talent too big or small!



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A Newsletter by Puerto Rican Folkloric  
Dance & Cultural Center  
15228 Quiet Pond Court  
Austin, TX 78728

We're on the web!  
[www.prfdance.org](http://www.prfdance.org)



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## Sembrando Herencia 2002

Concordia U's Louise T. Peter Center  
Saturday, December 7, 7:30pm

Join us for a joyful evening of traditional dance, music and song as we pass on a heritage to a new generation! *Sembrando Herencia 2002* is our annual performance that features our Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance performing company and showcases our youth and adult performing arts students. This evening will be historic as more than 40 of our own students, dancers, and musicians take the stage in this lively celebration of Puerto Rican culture. Special guests will include the "Coro de la Escuela Libre de Música," under the direction of Lesbia Ramirez, direct from Humacao, Puerto Rico. Afterwards, a post-performance reception will give the community a chance to learn more about this unique slice of Hispanic culture.

*Sembrando Herencia* will take place on December 7, 7:30 pm at Concordia University's Schroeder Performance Hall at the Louise T. Peter Center building, 3400 IH35 (near 38-1/2 St). Admission is \$7; no charge for children 2 & under (lap child). This lively performance and recital of traditional dance and music from Spanish, native Taino, and West African roots will be funded in part by the City of Austin under the Auspices of the Austin Arts Commission and others.

