



# Ritmo y Cultura

A Newsletter by Puerto Rican Folkloric  
Dance & Cultural Center

Spring 2003

Volume 1, Issue 2

## PRFDance Opens Its First Home!



Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance & Cultural Center (PRFDance) could not have started this year any better than by announcing the Grand Opening of our first physical home!

For over five years, PRFDance has been dedicated to the preservation and authentic representation of Puerto Rican culture. Our new home houses our ongoing programs in performing arts and cultural education as well as our performing company, "Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance."

Our new home is located at 507B Pressler Street, in the downtown warehouse complex housing Austin's own Tapestry Dance Company. We thank Acia Gray, Tapestry Director for her ongoing mentorship and support that has offered us a stable place to hold classes for over four years. We are now grateful for the opportunity she obtained for us to have this home of our own, and the continued support that will help make it possible.

A Dedication Ceremony was held in early February to inaugurate our new home. Nick Rivera, Director of the Puerto Rican Federal Affairs Administration (Houston office) traveled to Austin to give the dedication. Other esteemed guests included Olga Custodio, Director of Ballet Folklórico Boriken from San Antonio; members of Damas de Puerto Rico en Houston and of the San Antonio Puerto Rican organization; and the wonderful local community who have shown us so much support.

This opening of a first physical space in Austin dedicated to this unique slice of Hispanic culture brings a spotlight to Austin. We are one of the few in the country offering both ongoing performing arts and educational programs for children through adults in the full cross-section of Puerto Rican folklore and culture, and a performing company, under one roof.

Offering continuous programs since 1997, we have received recognition for three consecutive years by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, as well as cultural arts funding from the Texas Commission on the Arts and City of Austin.

### Inside this issue:

Inside Music & Dance Spring Session in Full Swing!	2
Special Guest: Joaquín Nieves Caldero	3
Cultural Lesson: Puerto Rican Coffee	4
Meet the Family: Robert Rodriguez Jr.	4
Poesía: El Puerto- Riqueño	6
Coming Soon: Celebrando 2003	8



## Saludos from the Founding Director

In February 2003, we proudly inaugurated our FIRST PHYSICAL HOME. For over five years, our non-profit (501(C)(3)) Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance, Inc. has been dedicated to the preservation and authentic representation of Puerto Rican culture. Up until this point, our programs took place in locations rented on an hourly basis. The opening of this new home is truly a blessing, a goal achieved 5 years ahead of schedule! Our performing arts students and performing company dancers are already enjoying our 1,000 square foot piece-of-heaven. Thanks to donations coming in through our Familia membership and other sponsors, renovation and purchases will continue throughout the year to serve our music classes and rehearsals, and to give us the ability to transform our space into a lecture hall for our Puerto Rican studies program.

The Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance & Cultural Center is a vibrant and growing institution thanks to an ever growing number of people who are helping build a legacy for our children and community. We dedicate this first home to those who come seeking a world-class education in culture and folklore, who wish to discover and celebrate their identity, who yearn to become connected to a community, who will inspire and be inspired by role models, mentors and friends, and who, inside these walls, find a sense of pride and a dream for the future.

Con cariño, su servidora,  
Dr. Ana Maria Maynard, Founding Director

## Inside Music & Dance ...

As we welcome the springtime at PRFDance, our focus turns to los Bailes de las Montañas, the dances of our mountain people—the jíbaros. Seis is considered the backbone of jíbaro music, and has its roots in the musical forms that came to Puerto Rico from Spain during the time of colonization and settlement in the late 17th century. One can also hear the influence of Arabic culture, due to eight centuries of Moorish domination in Spain.



All of the dance classes (Children, Teens, and Adult) are learning seis dances this semester. The adult dance class is learning a fast-paced seis with a complex choreography. Each student utilizes a pañuelo (handkerchief) during various sequences, adding even more motion and color to the dance. The Children and Teen classes continue to build on the foundation laid from previous semesters. The Children and Teen's programs began one and a half years ago, and "we are adding to our repertoire," said Teacher China Smith. "The students are able to identify rhythms and different types of music. They've learned how to sing songs in Spanish...even the students who don't speak Spanish."

The warm-up and cool-down portions of the class are often a great way to round out the sessions with different sounds and movements. The young students have enjoyed warming up to the popular modern rhythms of salsa and merengue. The adults have ended most classes in a classic bomba semi-circle, each student taking his or her turn dancing an improvisational solo to the lead bomba drummer. Next up for the dance classes this semester is the lively Plena, the urban art form that began to take shape around the turn of the (20th) century. The roots of Plena music include our West African heritage, the Spanish-Arabic influenced jíbaro music, the indigenous Taíno traditions, European-style salon music, and the music from the nearby English-speaking Caribbean islands. Plena is known as "el periodico cantado," the sung newspaper, because the songs contained stories about the history and everyday life of the people.

There are two exciting additions to the Music Program this semester: the Teen Drumming/Drum Circle and the Youth Choir. The beginner-through-professional level Drum Circle teaches drumming technique and traditional Puerto Rican rhythms such as Bomba and Plena. This offers a wonderful opportunity to mentor or be mentored, while training a new generation of drummers. PRFDance lead drummer Robert Rodriguez heads the Drum Circle, and has begun teaching the students basic bomba technique, particularly the sicá rhythm. The Youth Choir, led by Rose Rodriguez, teaches traditional and popular Puerto Rican compositions to children through teenagers. Rose comes to us with previous experience as a choir director; she is currently teaching the students a medley of much beloved plenas.

## Celebrando 2003 Special Guest: Joaquín Nieves Caldero & GUATEQUE



PRFDance Performing Company is very excited to present *Celebrando 2003* on July 12th and 13th. This year started off with a bang in preparation for this spectacular event, as PRFDance held five consecutive evenings of workshops in early January. Joaquín Nieves, Director of Guateque, led the master-level workshops that will culminate in a special joint performance in *Celebrando*; two dancers and three musicians from his company assisted him. We don't want to give away any performance treats that we have in store for the big show, but we can let you know a little more about our special guest...

Our extensive research on Puerto Rican folklore, conducted on the island itself over the past five years, has made the contributing master for *Celebrando 2003* an easy choice: Joaquín Nieves Caldero, founding director of The Guateque Folkloric Ballet of Puerto Rico. Joaquín was born in Corozal, Puerto Rico. From his early passion for the arts and dance emerged a poet at teen-age. During his years as a student at the University of Puerto Rico (where he earned a Bachelor's in Anthropology, a Master's in Counseling), Joaquín was a member of the group "Retablo Puertorriqueño." It is here where he solidified his interest in folkloric dance and visualized his hometown of Corozal becoming a model for Puerto Rican culture. In 1976, inspired by the island's culture and folklore, Joaquín founded Guateque Ballet Folklórico de Puerto Rico. He founded the Escuela de Bailes Guateque in 1984, which offers classes in jazz, folkloric music and dance to middle and high school students.

Guateque is a 40-plus member performing company of dancers and musicians based in the small town of Corozal, in the very mountains of Puerto Rico that is our focus. Joaquín is the artistic director, choreographer, costume designer, and visionary of Guateque. In his ballets, he recreates the past, giving careful attention not only to the authenticity of the music and dance steps, but to details ranging from the accuracy of period to regional costuming. The authenticity of Guateque's presentation of Jibaro music and dance is a reflection of Joaquín's own native roots in these mountains, as well as his extensive research of historical texts and throughout the Puerto Rican countryside; he has interviewed scores of locals who recounted particular village customs, local dances, legends, and music of generations past. From his efforts has flourished an elegant, nostalgic, and dignified choreographic design, one that alludes to the birth of a new choreographic style that reflects a sense of nationalism and historic legacy, combined with creativity.

Joaquín's extensive repertoire includes more than 15 full-length ballets composed of 90 dances representative of traditional life in Puerto Rico...from pre-colonization, to the Spanish and African heritage, up to the more contemporary dances of plena. Guateque has performed at international festivals all over the world including the United States, Europe, the Caribbean and Latin America. Over the years, Joaquín has been recognized by the National Endowment's Folk and Traditional Arts. Joaquín Nieves Caldero's 26-year contribution to the mountain genre of Puerto Rican folklore is unequalled, a living museum that has preserved this traditional style.

*Guateque bio by Ana Maria Maynard*





## A Cultural Lesson ... Aroma a Café

By Brenda Acosta

As a child, I remember how my abuela used to prepare coffee. She would take out two pans, one to boil a mixture of ground coffee with water and the other to boil the milk. Then she would use a *colador* to strain the coffee. The milk boiled until it formed *nata*. The sweet aroma of coffee would fill the house to announce that breakfast was ready. My abuelo would have a *pocillo de café puya* before leaving to work on his *vega*. The rest of us would drink *café con leche* and eat fresh bread with butter. Back then, even children were allowed a drink of this magic potion.

Puerto Rican Coffee has a very distinctive, full-bodied and sweet flavor. It is cultivated in the higher central regions along the Cordillera Central. The weather and geographic conditions are prime for the production of a top grade coffee bean (arabica). Coffee beans are hand picked, washed and lay out flat to dry in full sunlight. Once the beans are completely dried, they are roasted and stored for grinding.

Most of the coffee cultivated in Puerto Rico comes from the town of Yauco... the town that's perfumed by the essence of coffee. Historians have pointed out how the best coffee from Yauco was reserved for the Vatican, giving testimony to the excellent quality of this mountain-grown fruit berry.

Drinking coffee is a cherished Puerto Rican custom. Even in the most modest home, visitors would get offered at least a cup of coffee as token of hospitality. It is very common to complete a meal with a cup of coffee. To me, there is nothing like the rich aroma of Puerto Rican coffee to bring back happy memories from my childhood.



*Colador* - a hand held strainer

*Pocillo* - half a cup

*Café Puya* - black coffee, no sugar

## A Note from the Editors...

We are accepting articles for next issue of **Ritmo y Cultura**. Please send submissions to [newsletter@prfdance.org](mailto:newsletter@prfdance.org).

If you have a talent and would like to become part of this wonderful PRFDance family, we have a place for you! Contact us at [dance@prfdance.org](mailto:dance@prfdance.org) or call (512) 251-8122.

Jennifer Rush

Brenda A. Acosta

Meet the Family...

### Robert Rodriguez, Jr.

Lead Percussion, Artist-in-Residence

Roberto Rodriguez, Jr. was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico and moved to Texas with his family in 1986. Robert comes from a family that has always been involved with music. He plays timbales, congas and the barril, and has been the lead drummer for PRFDance since 2000. His life-long love for authentic, traditional percussion has been enhanced by workshops with Modesto Cepeda and Los Pleneros de la 21. He has played with salsa groups Ritmo Latino (Killeen), Dario y su Comborican (Austin), and Tony Guerrero (Austin).



1. *What brought you to PRFDance? My sister danced with the group; she introduced me to Ann Marie.*

2. *How old were you when you started playing music? About ten. What instrument? Timbales.*

3. *Name one of your favorite experiences with the group? Performing with Los Pleneros de la 21... spending that whole week with great musicians.*

4. *What music CD are you listening to this week? Grupo Afro Boricua's Bombazo.*

5. *What is your favorite Puerto Rican dish? Arroz con habichuelas & biftec cebolla'o.*

6. *Where is one place you've never been but would like to visit? Africa.*

7. *Which living person do you most admire? My dad.*

## PRFDance Future Events...

### Spring \*GALA\*

May 18, 2003

A private dress-up event to celebrate this year's accomplishments. PRFDance will honor our biggest Familia Sponsors (Tíos & above) and Industry donors with an invitation to this exclusive event to thank them for their generosity. Students, Company, Board and honored guests will enjoy a sit-down, homemade Puerto Rican buffet with family and friends. Special performance by the PRFDance Students and Company...topped off with DJ'd salsa and merengue!

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### PRFDance Family Picnic

Sunday, August 17, 2003

at Old Settler's Park Lakefront Pavillion (Round Rock)

The PRFDance Familia will be kicking off the new season with a Bombazo picnic. Come enjoy a relaxed afternoon amongst all of the students, company and board members, families and friends. This event is BringYourOwnPicnic (food & drink). ¡¡Te esperamos!!

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### Art Showing & Vejigante Mask-Making Workshop

The next workshop in Puerto Rican Studies will feature artist Lucy Llera. Ms. Llera's artwork, rich in Puerto Rican cultural themes, will be on display and she will lead a hands-on workshop on vejigante mask-making. Time and location TBA (**early Fall**).

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### New Salsa Class

Mondays, 6-7pm, starting March 31, 2003

By popular and repeated request, will we now offer a fun, "after work" class that will teach Salsa, the dance and the history behind it. Led by Ana Maria Maynard, Founding Director, this non-performance class will teach the simple Puerto Rican style remembered from family parties, weddings, baptisms and birthdays where family and friends brought congas, güiros, and maracas, and danced to the rhythms of Puerto Rico all night long. Class will be held Mondays, 6-7pm , \$40/month, discounts available.

## Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance

### 2003 Educational Programs

**Children Dance/Culture** - Saturdays at 10am

**Teen/Pre-Teen Dance/Culture** - Saturdays at 11am

**Youth Choir** - Saturdays at 10:45am

**Music Ensemble** - Thursdays at 7pm

**Salsa Classes** - Mondays at 6pm

**Adult Dance/Culture** - Mondays at 7pm

**Teen Drumming** - Mondays at 6:30pm

**Performing Company** (audition required)

Bilingual programs teach traditional dance, music and song (bomba, plena, seis, and danza), games, history and culture.

Classes are held at the Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance & Cultural Center, 507B Pressler Street in downtown Austin, between MOPAC and Lamar, off of 5th street. For more information, visit [www.prfdance.org](http://www.prfdance.org) or call 251-8122.

## Ensalada de Bacalao

(Salt Codfish Salad)

1½ lbs bacalao (salt codfish), cooked\* & shredded  
 1 large potato, boiled, peeled & cut into chunks  
 1 medium Spanish onion, peeled & minced  
 1 avocado, peeled & cut into chunks  
 3 hard-boiled eggs, sliced  
 1 red & 1 yellow bell pepper, seeded & cut into strips  
 1 tomato, seeded & chopped  
 1/3 cup white vinegar  
 1 cup olive oil  
 Salt & pepper to taste

In a serving bowl, combine the codfish with the potato, onion, avocado, egg, peppers, and tomato. In a separate bowl, combine the vinegar and oil; season to taste. Pour the dressing over the codfish mixture and toss well.

\*To cook bacalao, first soak it in water to cover overnight. Then put it in a pot with cold water to cover, and bring to a boil. When the water boils, pour it off and repeat with fresh cold water. Repeat once more, then taste the bacalao. If it still seems excessively salty, repeat once more, then cool and shred.

From A Taste of Puerto Rico by Yvonne Ortiz, ©1994

## In Memoriam...

Luis "Chichito" Cepeda  
 March 3, 1957 - February 5, 2003

Our thoughts and prayers are with  
 la familia Cepeda.

Reciban nuestro más sentido pésame.

## Sopa de Letras

Find some of the words common to the jibaro's music:

cadenas	seis	triple	aguinaldo
cuatro	guiro	bordonúa	parranda
maracas	garabato	trovador	décima

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

## El Puerto-Riqueño

By Manuel A. Alonso  
 From the book El Gíbaro

Dolor moreno, frente despejada,  
 Mirar láguido, altivo y penetrante,  
 La barba negra, pálido el semblante,  
 Rostro enjuto, nariz proporcionada.

Mediana talla, marcha compasada;  
 El alma de ilusiones anhelante,  
 Agudo ingenio, libre y arrogante,  
 Pensar inquieto, mente acalorada,

Humano, afable justo, dadivoso,  
 En empresas de amor siempre variable,  
 Tras la gloria y placer siempre afanoso,  
 Y en amor á su patria insuperable:  
 Este es, á no dudarlo, fiel diseño  
 Para copiar un buen Puerto-riqueno.

## Be a Part of the Future!

Become a sponsor today and become part of the PRFDance & Cultural Center, a growing institution offering one of the few nationally-awarded educational and performance programs in Puerto Rican traditional arts and culture in the country. We are building a legacy that will be a focal point for Puerto Rican culture and education in Central Texas.

Join the “PRFDance Familia” and receive wonderful benefits:

- Subscription to our cultural newsletter
- Insider’s emailing list
- Exclusive invitations
- Complimentary passes
- Shirts, totes
- Special backstage tours
- Free tickets, and more!



**Your contribution is tax deductible!!**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Description</b>
Angelitos	\$5,000 and higher	Angels bring gifts from heaven
Padrinos	\$1,000 and higher	Godparents care for us as their own
Padres	\$500 and higher	Loving parents encourage and support
Hermanos	\$250 and higher	Brothers/sisters share happy family memories
Tíos	\$100 and higher	Uncles/aunts love to bring you presents
Amigos	\$25 and higher	Special friends can always be counted on
Coquis (12 and under)	\$15	Our precious treasures

**¡Muchas Gracias!**

Thank you to **Armstrong McCall Professional Beauty Supply** for providing the printing of **Ritmo y Cultura**, Volume 1 Issue 2.

We appreciate your support!

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A Newsletter by Puerto Rican Folkloric  
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Austin, Texas 78728

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



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## Celebrando 2003 with Guateque

The State Theater  
719 Congress Avenue

**Saturday, July 12, 8:00pm**

**Sunday, July 13, 2:00pm**

Plan your summer vacation with PRFDance! This summer, the PUERTO RICAN FOLKLORIC DANCE performing company brings the rich culture of Puerto Rico to Austin with a unique performance entitled CELEBRANDO 2003, featuring special guests Joaquín Nieves and Guateque de Puerto Rico.



This celebration of traditional dance, music and song, will feature the fun-filled dances, live music and estampas (scenes from life) in our Bomba, Plena, Bailes de Salon traditions. Austin will enjoy world-class music and dance from the mountains of Puerto Rico when PRFDance takes the stage with National Endowment awarded Joaquín Nieves and members of his 26-year-old performing company, Guateque de Puerto Rico.

Celebrando 2003 will be funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Arts Commission on the Arts, the City of Austin under the Auspices of the Austin Arts Commission, the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, Target, Central Market, Red Lion Inn, Garcia Communications, and others.