canciones de mi isla songs from my island
# Table of Contents

1. Folk and Children's Songs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambos a Dos</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arroz Con Leche</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brinca la Tablita</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinco Pollitos</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Coquí</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escuela Linda</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Hijo del Conde</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Linda Manita</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naranjas Dulces</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mambru</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qué Bonita!</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qué Bonita Bandera!</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qué Llueva!</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Maria</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Composed Adult Songs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con Medio Peso</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En Mi Viejo San Juan</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campanitas de Cristal</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamento Borincano</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preciosa</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The music of Puerto Rico is as rich and varied as the ancient cultures represented in our people. Taino-Indian, Spanish, and Afro-Caribbean cultures are at the roots of the indigenous and popular music of Puerto Rico. Music has always been a common expression of all our people.

We have no record of Taino-Indian music and do not know what it actually sounded like. Our musicologists have ventured to guess that it was highly rhythmical and imitative of natural sounds. We perform much of our music with instruments they created, namely, the güiro (gourd-scraper) and maracas (gourd-rattles).

Spanish dances, the SEIS in particular, have had a marked influence on Puerto Rican music. But no influence has been greater or taken so much to heart as the rhythmical influence of our Afro-Caribbean contributors who really "ethnicized" our music. The BOMBA and the PLENA are prefect examples of authentic Puerto Rican music.

Like many other cultures, Puerto Rico has a large repertoire of songs for children. This book is a collection of the most popular of the songs Puerto Rican children sing.

A cassette tape of the songs in this book played on flute and piano is available from A.R.T.S., Inc., 32 Market Street, New York City 10002.
SOBRE LA PLENA (About the Plena)

The plena is one of the most exciting and joyful song-dances of the Caribbean. A combination of Afro-Caribbean and Spanish characteristics, the PLENA made its first appearance late in the nineteenth century. It came from the slum areas of coastal towns and 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 feigned matter-of-fact.

Originally, the instruments used for the PLENA were the SINFONÍA (concertina), TAMBOR (tom-tom drum), PANDERETA (hand drum), CLAVES (rhythm sticks), and GUIRO (gourd-scraper).

The melody (vocal) lines were sung in $\frac{2}{4}$ time, but were written out in triplets:

$\text{[Music notation]}$

The SINFONÍA (concertina) provided the harmonic content which was expressed with as few and as simple chord changes as possible:

$1, IV, V7, 1$ (Major Mode)

$1, V7, (Minor Mode),$ or

$1, VII, IV, V7, 1$ (Minor Mode).
The tambor (tom-tom drum) played the basic PLENA rhythm, expressed:

\[ \frac{2}{4} e \quad r \quad r \quad \text{etc.} \]

The pandereta (hand-drum) played the fast beat, expressed:

\[ \frac{2}{4} e \quad \text{etc.} \]

With the accent falling on the second half of the first and second beats.

The claves (rhythm sticks) play straight metric time, expressed:

\[ \frac{2}{4} e \quad \text{etc.} \]

The güiro (gourd-scraper) plays the most characteristic variation of the PLENA rhythm:

\[ \frac{2}{4} e \quad \text{etc.} \]
SOBRE LA BOMBA (About the Bomba)

The Bomba (an Afro-Caribbean expression synonymous with drum) is a native Puerto Rican dance of national popularity and importance. There are many versions of this dance whose roots stem from the music of the Spaniards. But no form of this dance has ever remained as popular or has been taken as much to heart by "los Puerto- rriquenos" as the Bomba of Afro-Caribbean origin.

The Bomba was the contribution of the Black-Puerto Ricans who lived along the coastal regions of Puerto Rico, brought to the island as slaves by the Spaniards. It was the featured dance performed at every festival and at every celebrated event. It is a conglomeration of African, Spanish, and sometimes French, musical expressions, resulting in an authentic expression of the Puerto Rican experience.

The Bomba was performed at regular weekly gatherings (celebrated outdoors), usually on Saturday evenings, after a long, hard week in the sugar cane fields. The musicians were the first to arrive and warm up by playing the Bomba rhythms, while the children played in the streets and passersby went about preparing for the weekly celebration. By evening, most of the participants would have gathered in the square or dance area, and the festivities could begin.

The instruments used for this dance are: two drums of different sizes called Bombas (tom-tom), medium and small; two sticks and a wood-block called Cua; and a single maraca (gourd-rattle).
The melody (vocal) line was sung by a chorus in unison or in octaves. In their original form, bombas were antiphonal and were not harmonized.

The larger drum or bomba, also named burlador, played the rhythmic pulse of the dance in \( \frac{6}{8} \) meter, expressed:

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{6}{8} & : \quad : \quad : \\
\end{align*}
\]

The smaller drum, also called requinto or subidor, played contrasting rhythms, also in a \( \frac{6}{8} \) meter, expressed:

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{6}{8} & : \quad : \quad : \\
\end{align*}
\]

This is one of the many variations produced by the smaller drum in order to maintain the polyrhythmical nature of the dance.

The cua (wood-block played with sticks) played the following rhythmic part:

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{6}{8} & : \quad : \quad : \\
\end{align*}
\]

The single maraca, played by one of the singers or dancers, could play freely any rhythmic part fitting into the main pulse or beat of the bomba. For example:

\[
\begin{align*}
\frac{6}{8} & : \quad : \quad : \\
\end{align*}
\]

William Bellber
AMBOS A DOS

Am - bos a dos, ma - ta - ri - le, ri - le,
ri - le, Am - bos a dos, ma - ta - ri - le, ri - le ron.

2. ¿Qué quiere usted? Matarile, rile, rile, etc.
3. Yo quiero un pajé, matarile, rile, rile, etc.
4. Escoja usted, matarile, rile, rile, etc.
5. Yo escojo a fulanito, matarile, rile, rile, etc.
6. ¿Qué oficio le va a poner? Matarile, rile, rile, etc.
7. Le pondremos carpintero, matarile, rile, rile, etc.
8. El dice que no le gusta, matarile, rile, rile, etc.
9. Le pondremos bailarín, matarile, rile, rile, etc.
10. El dice que sí le gusta, matarile, rile, rile, etc.
11. Celebraremos todos juntos, matarile, rile, rile, etc.

Two by two, matarile, rile, rile, etc.
What do you want? I want a page.
Choose him yourself. I choose somebody.
What job shall we give him?
Let's make him a carpenter. He doesn't like that job.
Let's make him a dancer. He likes that job.
Let's celebrate together.
ARROZ CON LECHE

Arroz con leche se quiere casar con una viudita de la capital; que sepa coser, que sepa bordar, que ponga la aguja en su Campbell.

Tín tán, sopitas de pan.
Rice and milk want to get married to a little widow from the capitol who knows how to crochet, who knows how to embroider, who sticks her needle into the pin-cushion. Tin! Tan! Thin bread soup.
BRINCA LA TABLITA

BRIN - CA LA TA - BLI - TA, YA YO
LA BRIN - QUÉ, BRIN - CA LA TU - 
HO - RA QUE YO ME CAN - SÉ.

2. Dos y dos son cuatro, cuatro y dos son seis.
Seis y dos son ocho, y ocho diez y seis,
3. Y ocho, veinticuatro, y ocho treinta y dos.
¡Animas benditas!* me arrodillo yo.

*Or, Aquí se termina,

Jump the board. I've already jumped it.
You jump it now because I am tired.
Two plus two are four. Four and two are six,
Six and two are eight and eight, sixteen and
eight, twenty-four and eight, thirty-two.
Good souls, I kneel down (to pray).

*Alternative ending "and here it finishes".
My aunt has five baby chicks. One jumps, another cries, and the others sing a symphony.
EL COQUI

El co-qui, el co-qui a mi me en-can-ta.

Es tan lin-do el can-tar del co-qui__

Por las noches al ir a-cos-tar-me

Me-a-dor me-ce can-tan-do a sí__

Co-qui, co-qui, co-qui, qui, qui,
QUI, CO-QUI, CO-QUI, CO-QUI, QUI, QUI, QUI.

THE COQUI, HOW I LOVE IT. IT'S SO PRETTY, THE SONG OF THE COQUI. AT NIGHT WHEN I GO TO BED, IT ROCKS ME TO SLEEP, SINGING THIS: COQUI, COQUI, COQUI, QUI, QUI, QUI, (ETC.)
ESCUELA LINDA, ESCUELA MÍA *  

TIEMPO DE BOLER0  

Es-cue-la lin-da ___ es-cue-la  

Mí-a __ ca-mi-no de es-per-an-zas  

Ra-yi-to de luz____ sencer-o de en-sen- 

án-zas _____ que al-e-g-ra el co-ra-zón  

Siem-pre te lle-va-ré __ con a-le- 

grí-a ______ den-tro del al-ma ____  

* A GRADUATION SONG
Pretty school, my school; road of hope -little ray of sunshine-
learning path which brings my heart joy. I shall always remember
you with happiness, deep in my soul, pretty school, my school.
2. Tanto estuvo el hombre, ¡caramba! con aquel papel hasta que mi madre, ¡caramba! lo llego a saber.

3. Yo le contesté, ¡caramba! en otro papel que me casaría, ¡caramba! pero no con él.

4. Me cogió mi madre, ¡caramba! me llevó al corral con la disciplina, ¡caramba! me quiso matar.
The son of the count, dear me! Sent me a letter asking me if I wanted, dear me! to marry him. He kept trying so hard, dear me! with his letters that my mother, dear me! found out. I answered him in another letter that I would get married, dear me! but not with him! My mother took me, dear me! out to the yard and beat me almost to death with the ruler,
1. La linda manita que tiene el bebé:

La linda, que mona, ¡qué bonita es!

2. ¡Qué linda manita la que tengo yo!

¡Qué linda, que mona, que Dios me la dio!

The baby has a pretty little hand! How pretty, how cute, how graceful it is!
I have a pretty hand! How pretty, how cute, what God gave me!
NARANJAS DULCES

Sweet oranges, bitter lemon, give me a hug; this I ask of you.
If your oath of honor is false, I'll forget you in a moment.
MAMBRU

Mambru se fue a la guerra, que dolor, que dolor, que pena. Mambru se fue a la guerra y no sé cuándo vendrá. Que re mi do, que do re si, no sé cuándo vendrá.
2. Si vendrá para Pascuas, que dolor, que dolor, que pena, 
Si vendrá para Pascuas, o para Navidad.
Que re mi do, que do re si, o para Navidad.

3. Allá viene un barquito, que dolor, que dolor, que pena,
Allá viene un barquito, que noticias traerá?
Que re mi do, que do re si, qué noticias traerá?

Mambru went off to war, what sorrow, what pain.
Mambru went off to war, when will he return?
Will he return for Easter, what sorrow, what pain.
Will he return for Easter, or for Christmas?
There comes a little boat, what sorrow, what pain.
There comes a little boat, what news will it bring?
¡QUE BONITA!

¡Qué bonita es! ¡Qué bonita es! ¡Qué bonita es la mujer que viene de Borinquen!

Las hay blancas y trigueñas y negras como lo ves, que
How beautiful they are! How beautiful they are! How beautiful are the women who come from Borinquen. They are white and mixed and black, as you can see. They are sweet as honey and lovely as Borinquen.
¡QUE BONITA BANDERA!

¡Qué bonita Bandera, la Bandera Puer-tor-ri-queña!

A - zul, blan-ca y co-lo-ra-da
WHAT A PRETTY FLAG!  WHAT A PRETTY FLAG!
WHAT A PRETTY FLAG, THE FLAG OF PUERTO RICO!
BLUE, WHITE, AND RED, WITH A STAR IN THE CENTER,
GENTLEMEN, HOW PRETTY IS THE FLAG OF PUERTO RICO.
¿Qué llueva!

Qué llueva, qué llueva, la Virgen de la cueva, los pajaritos cantan, las nubes se levantan, ¿qué sí! ¿qué no! ¿qué sí! ¿qué no! Que llueva chapañón!
Let it rain! Let it rain! The virgin of the cave, the birds sing, the clouds go away. Yes, no, let it rain in heavy showers.
SANTA MARÍA

SANTA MARÍA, LIBRÁNOS DE TODO MAL. AMPARÁNOS SEÑORA,
DE TAN TERRIBLE ANIMAL!

TE-NÍ-A CARA DE BUEY _ EL PECHO DE UN TORO BRAVO, TE-
NÍ-A PATAS DE YEGUA.
2. Comunican de Aguadilla, que a la seis vieron correr; 
Al diablo a sesenta millas, huyéndole a una mujer.

Saint Mary, protect us from all harm; save us, dear lady, from 
this terrible animal. 
He had the face of an ox, the chest of a bull; he had the legs 
of a mare, and a yard-and-a-half long tail. 
We heard the news from Aguadilla that they saw the devil running 
at sixty miles an hour-running from a woman!
COMPOSED ADULT SONGS

Con Medio Peso is a popular and humorous song. It was written as a satire on prevailing economic conditions during the 1950’s and tells the charmingly funny tale of one Puerto Rican’s solution to the problem of inflation.

En mi viejo San Juan reflects the deepest sentiments of all those Puerto Ricans who, although far away from home, never cease to cherish the thought, nor relinquish the hope, of returning to our native homeland. This is, without a doubt, one of the best-loved songs in the Puerto Rican popular music repertoire.

Campanitas de Cristal, Preciosa and Lamento Borincano were written by Rafael Hernandez, Puerto Rico’s greatest and most popular composer.

Campanitas de Cristal (crystal Bells) was inspired during a moment when Rafael was sitting comfortably in an armchair next to a lamp whose shade was encircled by crystals. As the summer breeze gently blew, it made the crystals sound. Thus, was born the romantic and poetic ballad. This song was performed and recorded by every major artist in every country where Spanish is spoken. It is possibly the most frequently performed and recorded song in the entire Spanish music repertoire.

Preciosa and Lamento Borincano have come to be regarded as national anthems by the Puerto Rican people. The roots of these two songs are deeply imbedded in the social, political, and economic life of the island. They are genuine expressions of our joys and sorrows, of the deep, abiding love and respect for our native homeland. They also reflect the invincible spirit of our people.

William Bellber
"Seis" lijero

Con medio peso compré una vaca y esa vaca me dió becerros;

Tengo vaca, tengo becerros,

Todo eso por medio peso.
2. Con medio peso compré una chiva y esa chiva me dio chivitos. Ya tengo vacas tengo becerros tengo chiva tengo chivitos. Todo eso por medio peso.

3. Con medio peso compré gallinas y esas gallinas dieron pollitos. Ya tengo vacas tengo becerros tengo chivos tengo chivitos. Tengo gallinas tengo pollitos. Todo eso por medio peso.

4. Con medio peso compré una mona y esa mona me dio monitos. Ya tengo vacas tengo becerros tengo chivos tengo chivitos. Tengo gallinas tengo pollitos tengo mona tengo monitos. Todo eso por medio peso...

Y me prestaron el medio peso!
With half a dollar I bought a cow, and that cow gave me some calves. I have a cow and I have calves. And all of that for half a dollar!

With half a dollar I bought a goat, and that goat gave me some kids. I have a cow; I have calves, I have a goat and I have kids. And all of that for half a dollar!

With half a dollar I bought some hens, and those hens gave me some chicks. I have a cow, I have calves, I have a goat, I have some kids, I have some hens and I have some chicks. And all of that for half a dollar!

With half a dollar I bought a monkey, and that monkey gave me a baby monkey. I have a cow, I have calves, I have a goat, I have kids, I have some hens, I have some chicks, I have a monkey and I have some baby monkeys. And all of that for half a dollar...

And I did all that with the half-dollar I borrowed!
EN MI VIEJO SAN JUAN

Noel Estrada

En mi viejo San Juan cuántos sueños forjó en mis años de infancia.

Mi primera ilusión y mis cuántas de alma,

Mor son recuerdos del alma

Una tarde partí hacia extraña na-
Ción pues lo que es el destino

Pero mi corazón se quedó frente al

Mar en mi viejo San Juan — Adiós

Bo-rin-quen querida — Adiós — Mi Diossa del mar — Me
IN MY ANCIENT SAN JUAN, HOW MANY DREAMS I HAD IN THE YEARS OF
MY CHILDHOOD: MY VERY FIRST LOVE, AND THE TEARS THAT I SHED, IN
MY SOUL THEY'RE REMEMBERED.
THEN CAME THE DAY, ALAS, WHEN I HAD TO LEAVE MY BEAUTIFUL ISLAND.
BUT MY HEART STAYED BEHIND IN THAT TOWN BY THE SEA, IN MY ANCIENT
SAN JUAN.
FAREWELL, MY ONLY BORINGUEN. FAREWELL, GODDESS OF THE SEA, LAND
OF SUN AND PEACE.
I GO; NOW I GO. BUT SOMEDAY I SHALL RETURN. I SHALL FIND LOVE
AGAIN, I SHALL DREAM ONCE AGAIN, IN MY ANCIENT SAN JUAN.
CAMPANITAS DE CRISTAL

BY RAFAEL HERNANDEZ

CUANDO LA BRISA DE INVIERNO SE

CUELA POR MI VENTANITA

Oigo sonar oigo sonar

Como si un ángel con manos de

SEDA EN MIS CAMPANITAS

TOCARÁ UN MADRIGAL
UN MADRIGAL

LIN, LIN, LIN.

OYE QUE BONITO ES EL LIN

DE MIS CAMPAÑITAS DE CRISTAL

Ti-LIN, Ti-LIN, Ti-LIN

Campanas que tanen para mi
TAN DULCE CANCIÓN.

LINDAS CAMPANITAS DE CRISTAL QUE ALEGRA MIS

HORAS DE DOLOR _ SONAR SONAR__ SOLO PARA MÍ, SOLO PARA

MÍ, CAMPANITAS DE CRISTAL._
When in the winter the breeze comes through my window, I hear, I hear them sing; I hear them sing, as if an angel with hands made of silk played on bells near my window sill. They played a madrigal, a madrigal—ti-lin, ti-lin, ti-lin. Listen. How pretty is the ti-lin of my crystal glass bells—ti-lin, ti-lin, ti-lin. Bells that play for me a lovely song. Pretty bells that bring life to my hours of sorrow. Ringing, ringing, ringing. Only for me, only for me, crystal bells.
LAMENTO BORINCANO

BY RAFAEL HERNANDEZ

Sale loco de consigo
Lleva en su pensamiento

dentro con su carga-miento para la ciudad

Dad, ay para la ciudad

Piensa remediar la situación

Del hogar que es toda su ilusión, si

Ya alegra el jiba

Ya alegra también su
RITO VA PEN-SAN-DO A-SÍ, DÍ-
YE-GUA VA AL PRE-SEN-TIR QUE A

CIEN-DO A-SÍ CAN-TAN-DO A-SÍ POR EL CA-
QUEL CAN-TAR ES TO-DO UN HIM-NO DE A-Le-

MI-NO ____. SI YO VEN-DO LA
GRÍ-A ______. Y EN ÉS-TO LE SOR-

car-ga, MI DíOS QUE-RI-DO ______
pren-de la luz del dí-a ______

UN TRA-JE A MI VIE-JI-TA VOY A COM-PRAR
Y LLE-GAN AL MER-CA-DO DE LA CIU-DA-

______ YO TAM-BIÉN.
Pasa, la mañana entera
sin que nadie quiera
su carga comprar, ay, su carga comprar.
Todo, todo está desierto
y el pueblo está muerto
de necesidad sí, de necesidad.
Se oye este lamento por doquier
en mi desdichada Borinquen, sí.

Y triste el jíbarito va
llorando así, pensando así,
diciendo así por el camino.
Qué será de Borinquen
mi Dios querido.
Qué será de mis hijos y de mi hogar.

Borinquen, la tierra del Eden
la que al cantar el gran Gautier
llamo la perla de los mares.
Ahora que tú te mueres con tus pesares,
Déjame que te canté yo también.
Yo también..............

He is very happy to be taking his products to town. In his way, he thinks of a world full of happiness. He plans how to improve his life and home; this is what he lives for. He laughs and sings as he goes, his head full of plans. "If I sell my load, God in heaven, I will buy my wife a beautiful dress." And his horse seems to share his dreams and his song. The sun rises; soon he will be at the market.
The whole morning goes by and nobody buys anything from him. Everything is deserted; the town is dying of poverty. If you hear this sad song anywhere, it comes from Borinquen. The sad country boy goes crying like this as he goes: "What will become of Borinquen, my dear Lord?" What will become of my sons and my home?" Borinquen, the land of Eden, which great Gautier called "Pearl of the Sea". Now that you are dying of hardship, I want to sing to you".
1. Yo sé lo que son los encantos,
   de mi Borinquen hermosa,
   por eso la quiero tanto, por
   perla del Caribe, perla del Caribe,
   be, Borinquen ____,

2. Yo sé de sus hembras trigueñas,
   sé del color de sus rosas,
   por eso a mi tierra Riqueña, por
   perla del Caribe, perla del Caribe,
   be, Borinquen ____,

Siempre la llamaré Preciosa
Preciosa

Preciosa

be, Borinquen ____
CIO-SA TE LLAMAN LAS O-LAS DEL MAR QUE TE
BA-ÑAN PRE-CIO-SA POR SER UN EN-
CANTO, POR SER UN E-DÉN Y
TIE-NES LA NO-BLE HI-DAL-GUÍA DE LA MA-DRE ES-
PA-ÑA Y EL FIERO CAN-TI-O DEL IN-DIO BRA-
VÍ-O LO TIE-NES TAM-BIÉN ___ PRE-
CIO-SA TE LLAMA-N LOS BAR-DOS QUE CANTAN TU HIST-
TÓ-RIA__, NO IM-POR-TA EL TI-RA-NO TE
TRA-TE CON NE-GRA MAL-DAD__, PRE-
CIO-SA SE-RÁS SIN BAN-DE-RA, SIN LAU-ROS NI
GLO-RI-A__. PRE-CIO-SA, PRE-
CIO-SA, TE LLAMA-N LOS HI-JOS DE LA LI-BER-TAD.
I know all about the enchantment of my Borinqueño so precious. That is why I love her so dearly and always will call her so lovely, "Pearl of the Caribbean", "Pearl of the Caribbean", Borinquen.

I know of her fine Spanish women and of her roses so red. That is why my own Borinquen I will always know as "so lovely", "Pearl of the Caribbean", "Pearl of the Caribbean", Borinquen.

"So lovely", you're called by the waves from the ocean that bathe you, "so lovely", for being enchanting, for being an Eden. And also, you carry your nobility from your mother Spain. And the savage chant of Indians brave are also your own.

"So lovely", the poets all call you when they speak your story. What does it matter if all the tyrants threaten you with their evil minds. "So lovely" you'll be without banners, triumphs, or glory. "So lovely", so lovely", you're called by the sons of true liberty.