

The Importance of Folk Songs, Stories and Games in Latin American culture: an Interactive Workshop with Voice and Percussion

Many folk songs around the world are based on folk tales, often with the intent of explaining phenomena or of scaring children into behaving, (think the boogeyman, Dracula, or even, the Grimm’s fairytales). One of the stories told in Mexico is about a witch, who much like Dracula, sucks the blood of her victims. This song, “La Bruja” takes a first-person perspective on this character as the witch sings about flying around at 2:00 in the morning and searching for her victims.

“La Bruja,” composed and interpreted by Jose Gutierrez and the Ochoa brothers, is a traditional *son jarocho* from Veracruz, Mexico. The primary instrument in *son jarocho* music is the jarana, which looks like a small, skinny guitar. The jarana comes in various sizes. Other stringed instruments include *requintos* and sometimes harps. Percussion instruments include the *quijada* (donkey jaw bone), sometimes a *rhumba* box, and, most importantly, dancing. Indeed, the dancers are the percussionists, as they dance a step known as *zapateado* on a small, wooden platform called a *tarima*.

La Bruja	The Witch
¡Ay que bonito es volar y a las 2 de la mañana! ¡y a las 2 de la mañana! ay que bonito es volar ay mamá	Oh! how wonderful it is to fly at two in the morning at two in the morning oh! how wonderful it is to fly, oh woman!
volar y dejarse caer en los brazos de tu hermana ¡en los brazos de tu hermana y hasta quisiera llorar	To fly and let yourself fall in the arms of your sister, in the arms of your sister until you want to cry
me agarra la bruja, me lleva a su casa me vuelve maceta, y una calabaza	The witch grabs me she takes me to her house she turns me into a pot and into a pumpkin.
me agarra la bruja, me lleva al cerrito me sienta en sus piernas me da de besitos	The witch grabs me she takes me to the little hill She sits me on her lap She gives me little kisses
Ay dígame, dígame hay dígame usted cuantas criaturitas se ha chupado usted	Oh! you must tell me, tell me, tell me how many little ones have you drunk from?
ninguna ninguna no ve que ando en pretensiones	None, None, don't you see? I just want to

de chuparlo a usted	drink from you.
¡Ay! me espantó una mujer, ¿a dónde? en medio del mar salado, en medio del mar salado, ¡ay! me espantó una mujer, ¡ay mamá!	Oh! I was frightened by a woman, where? in the middle of the salty sea in the middle of the salty sea oh! I was frightened by a woman, oh woman!
¿Por qué no quería creer lo que otros me habían contado? lo de arriba era mujer y lo de abajo pescado, ¡ay mamá!	Why didn't I want to believe what others had told me? from above she was a woman from below she was a fish, oh woman!
¡Ay! dígame, dígame dígame usted ¿cuántas criaturitas se ha chupado usted?	Oh! you must tell me, tell me, tell me how many little ones have you drunk from?
Ninguna, ninguna no ve, ando en pretensiones de chuparme a usted.	None, None, don't you see? I just want to drink from you.

YouTube videos:
[La Bruja, Lila Downs](#)
[La Bruja, Veracruz](#)
[Zapateado](#)

Tarima (stage), *Zapateado* (dance steps)



Image credits:
<http://www.24-horas.mx/son-jarocho-alista-fiesta-en-el-cenart-con-ocho-conciertos-en-sus-areas-verdes/>

<https://centerforworldmusic.org/2016/03/the-jarana-jarocho/>

Jaranas
 (guitar-like instruments featured in
 Son Jarocho music)



Written by Alfredo Zitarrosa in 1966, “Zamba por Vos” is primarily romantic in nature. *Zambas* are part of an Argentine folkloric repertoire. The primary instruments are guitar, voice, and *bombo* (an Argentine drum). *Zamba* dances follow a specific choreography that involves the waving of a *pañuelo*, (handkerchief). The basic *zamba* hand movement consists of making figure-eight-like patterns as one dances. *Zambas* are romantic dances, performed between couples.

Zamba por Vos

Zamba for You

<p>Yo no canto por vos; te canta la zamba. Y dice al cantar: no te puedo olvidar, no te puedo olvidar. Y dice al cantar: no te puedo olvidar, no te puedo olvidar.</p> <p>Yo no canto por vos; te canta la zamba. Y cantando así canta para mí canta para mí. Y cantando así canta para mí canta para mí. Zambita canta no la esperes más Tenés que pensar que si no volvió es porque ya te olvidó Perfumá esa flor, que se marchitó que se marchitó.</p> <p>Yo tuve un amor, lo dejé esperando. Y, cuando volví no lo conocí no lo conocí. Y, cuando volví no lo conocí no lo conocí. Dijo que tal vez, me estuviera amando. Me miró y se fué sin decir por qué sin decir por qué. Me miró y se fué sin decir por qué</p>	<p>I don't sing for you; the <i>zamba</i> is singing. And it says singing: I can't forget you, I can't forget you. And it says singing: I can't forget you, I can't forget you.</p> <p>I don't sing for you; the <i>zamba</i> is singing. And singing this way it sings for me it sings for me. And singing this way it sings for me it sings for me. <i>Zamba</i> sing don't wait for her anymore You have to think that if she didn't return is because she forgot you Perfume that flower, that withered that withered.</p> <p>I had a love, I left her waiting. And, when I returned I didn't know her I didn't know her. And, when I returned I didn't know her I didn't know her. She said that maybe, she was loving me. She looked at me and left without saying why without saying why. She looked at me and left without saying why</p>
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<p>sin decir por qué.</p> <p>Zambita canta no la esperes más Tenés que pensar que si no volvió es porque ya te olvidó Perfumá esa flor, que se marchitó que se marchitó.</p>	<p>without saying why.</p> <p><i>Zamba</i> sing don't wait for her anymore You have to think that if she didn't return is because she forgot you Perfume that flower, that withered that withered</p>
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YouTube Video:

[Zamba por Vos, Alfredo Zitarrosa](#)

The next song is a children’s song that it sung in many countries including Mexico and Spain. This song teaches children the parts of a body. It is a fun song that has many different versions with distinct lyrics.

A Mi Burro	My Donkey
<p>A mi burro, mi burro Le duele la cabeza Y el médico le manda Una gorrita negra Una gorrita negra Mi burro enfermo está Mi burro enfermo está</p>	<p>My donkey, my donkey His head hurts The doctor gives him A black cap A black cap My donkey is sick My donkey is sick</p>
<p>A mi burro, mi burro Le duele la garganta Y el médico manda Una bufanda blanca Una bufanda blanca Una gorrita negra Mi burro enfermo está Mi burro enfermo está</p>	<p>My donkey, my donkey His throat hurts The doctor gives him A white scarf A white scarf A black cap My donkey is sick My donkey is sick</p>
<p>A mi burro, mi burro Le duele el corazón Y el médico le manda Gotitas de limón Gotitas de limón Una bufanda blanca Una gorrita negra Mi burro enfermo está Mi burro enfermo está</p>	<p>My donkey, my donkey His heart hurts The doctor gives him Drops of lemon Drops of lemon A white scarf A black cap My donkey is sick My donkey is sick</p>
<p>A mi burro, mi burro Ya no le duele nada</p>	<p>My donkey, my donkey Now nothing hurts him</p>

Y el médico le manda Trocitos de manzana Trocitos de manzana Gotitas de limón Una bufanda blanca Una gorrita negra Mi burro sano está Mi burro sano esta	The doctor gives him Pieces of apple Pieces of apple Drops of lemon A white scarf A black cap My donkey is healthy My donkey is healthy
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YouTube Video:
[A mi burro, a mi burro](#)

The last song is a Mexican folk song that is also often sung with children.

De Colores	In Colors
De colores, De colores se visten los campos En la primavera	In colors, In colors the fields are dressed In the springtime
De colores, De colores son los pajaritos Que vienen de fuera	In colors, Colorful are the little birds That come from far away ¹
De colores, De colores es el arcoiris Que vemos lucir	In colors, Colorful is the rainbow That we see shine
Y por eso los grandes amores De muchos colores me gustan a mi	And that is why the great loves of many colors are pleasing to me (3Xs)
Canta el gallo, Canta el gallo con el Quiri, quiri, quiri, quiri, quiri	Sings the rooster, Sings the rooster with the Cock-a-doodle-do, cock-a-doodle do...
La gallina, La gallina con el Cara, cara, cara, cara, cara	The hen, The hen with the Cluck, cluck, cluck, cluck, cluck...
Los polluelos, Los polluelos con el Pio, pio, pio, pio, pi	The baby chicks, The baby chicks with the Peep, peep, peep, peep...
Y por eso los grandes amores De muchos colores me gustan a mi	And that is why the great loves Of many colors are pleasing to me

YouTube Video:
[De Colores, Jose Luis Orozco](#)