

Words and Concepts

The Yorùbá tradition: comprises of the traditional religious and spiritual concepts and practices of the Yorùbá people. Its homeland is in Southwestern Nigeria and the adjoining parts of Benin and Togo, a region that has come to be known as Yorùbáland. This religion has found its way throughout the world and is now expressed in practices as varied as Santería (Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico), Candomblé (Brasil), Orisha religion (Trinidad and Tobago), and Vodun (Haiti), among others.

Orisha (also spelled Orisa or Orixá): a spirit or deity that reflects one of the manifestations of God in the Yorùbá religious system.

Alpón: principle singer (sings first)

Coro: the chorus; responds to the alpón (sings second)

Cha Cha Iokuafun: Name of the basic orisha rhythm played by the 3 batá drums used to accompany the songs and dances in the Yorùbá tradition.

Afro-Cuban Folkloric Songs from the Yorùbá Tradition

* Canto de Yemayá * (Song for Yemayá) *	
Yemayá is known as The Great Mother of the ocean and of all creation.	
Verse 1	Verse 2
Yemaya Assessu Assessu yemaya Yemaya Assessu Assessu yemaya	Yemaya olodo Olodo yemaya Yemaya olodo Olodo yemaya

General Translation: A celebration of the moment when the river meets the ocean.

* Canto de Oshún * (Song for Oshún) *
Oshún is the orisha of women, love, sensuality and maternity. She reins over all freshwater, such as streams and rivers.
Ide were were nita ochun Ide were were Ide were were nita ochun Ide were were nita ya Ocha kiniba nita ochun Cheke cheke cheke nita ya Ide were were

General Translation: This chant speaks preparing (e.g., bathing) and adorning oneself (e.g., with bracelets, anklets, necklaces, etc) as a way to initiate love and self-love.

Rumba is a collection of music and dance forms, of Cuban origin, with African influences. After the Cuban Revolution (1959), rumba shifted from a spontaneous, improvisational event to a formal choreographed public performance. **Three styles of rumba are currently practiced and taught: el yambú, el guaguancó, and la columbia.**

Three Elements of the Rumba:

* SONG *

A key component to the rumba complex.
Expresses the human condition
Performed in relation to the music, especially the clave rhythm.
Usually performed as call-and-response format.

* PERCUSSION *

Los Claves (two pieces, 7-9 inches, of hard wood)
El catá (sharp sound)
Maruga (metal shaker)
Los cajones (boxes)
Las tumbadoras (drums)

* DANCE *

El yambú:

- Performed by men and women
- Attraction and rejection narrative:
 - * The man demonstrates his elegance, grace, and style, flattering and enticing the woman to reciprocate his advances.
 - * The woman shows grace and style by encouraging and responding coyly to the man's advances but ultimately rejects him.

El guaguancó:

- Cat and Mouse game narrative (similar to that of el yambú).
- Performed by men and women
- Embellished by ***el vacunao***
 - ~ *El vacunao* literally means the vaccination; however, in the game of rumba it is a movement performed by the man directed towards the woman's hips. *Examples:* a forward thrust of the man's hip or fling of his arm or handkerchief.

La columbia:

- Rivalry and improvisation are emphasized:
- Both the lead singers and the dancers demonstrate their talents and improvisational skills.
- Dancers are allowed to display their own personal style and virtuosity.
 - ~ *Examples:* acrobatic flips, demonstrating speed and agility, or use of knives, fire, blindfolds, etc.