

Bullerengue

The following essay about the song “Bullerengue” by Jose Antonio Rincon (music) and Jorge Artel (lyrics) was extracted from these websites and book. For more information, read the articles:

<http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bullerengue>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombian_music_terminology#cite_note-Waxer-0

<http://www.mosaico21.com/onlinemosaicoxxi/english/music/bene.htm>

http://www.expressnightout.com/content/2008/02/rhythm_generations_petrona_martinez.php

<http://www.amazon.com/Colombia-Bullerengue-Petrona-Martinez/dp/B00000AE49>

<http://www.vallesounds.com/valle/jvessay1.html>

Without Hatreds Or Fears, Jorge Artel and the Struggle for Black Literary Expression in Colombia (By Laurence Emmanuel Prescott) - from Google Books.

This article includes a brief biography of the lyricist, Jorge Artel. The name of the piece derives from a Colombian song form called “bullerengue.” Included below are articles about the song form and its history.

No written information could be found about the composer Jose Antonio Rincon, the song, or the collaboration between composer and lyricist. If anything more is found, it will be included in a future “Additions and Corrections.”

Click on the audio and video links to hear various performances of “Bullerengue,” and of instrumental and dance examples of the bullerengue genre.

Finally, you can view the song lyrics, and its English interpretation.

Jorge Artel

Artel was a journalist, secretary of the University of Panamá, and a member of the "literary generation" know as *Piedra y Cielo*; composer of "black poetry."

(b. April 27, 1909, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia; d. August 19, 1994, Barranquilla, Colombia), Afro-Colombian poet, lawyer, journalist, and diplomat; Artel, whose real name was Agapito de Arcos, was one of the most representative poets of the Negritude in South America.

Jorge Artel was born in Colombia, in the colonial city of Cartagena de Indias, once the major entryway for slaves into the Spanish colonies in South America. He grew up surrounded by the drumbeats of the cumbia music, slavery’s violent legacies, and the history of resistance

embodied in the many maroon communities that dotted the city's borders. In his poetry he evokes those images, especially, as Lawrence Prescott has noted, using the symbol of the drum as the unifying thread essential to the black experience in the Americas. Like other black poets in Spanish America, such as the Cuban Nicolas Guillen (1902-1989) and the Afro-Peruvian Nicomedes Santa Cruz (1925-1992), Artel did not single out race alone as the defining element that shaped his life and his aesthetic vision. For him as for the others, class and economic exploitation were as important, and this awareness allowed them to express strong feelings of commitment toward the various other struggles faced by their fellow countrymen.

Artel published three books of poetry. *Tambores en la noche* (1940, Drums in the Night); *Poemas, con botas y banderas* (1972, Poems with Boots and Flags); and the 1987 *Sinu, riberas de asombro jubilos* (Sinu, River-banks of Joyful Wonder). In 1979 and again in 1986 he published revised anthologies of his poetry, *Tambores en la noche*, published at a time when other important black Spanish American authors such as Adalberto Ortiz (b. 1914), Pilar Barrios (1899-1974), and Juan Pablo Sojo (1908-1948) were issuing their first publications, was probably written during the 1930s in Cartagena. It is considered to be one of the first poetic interpretations of the modern Afro-Hispanic experience. Drawing on the poetic legacies of Candelario Obeso (1849-1884), Artel sometimes used colloquial speech and often explored themes characteristic of the Negritude movement, such as music and dance, Africa, and the question of identity.

Artel also published a novel, *No es la muerte, es el morir* (1979, It Is Not Death, It Is the Dying), that sympathetically portrays the guerrillas in a civil war that has devastated Colombia. In 1986 Jorge Artel was declared a national poet, but he remains relatively unknown both in Colombia and abroad.

Bullerengue Music

bullerengue: A Costeño form, performed by flute-and-drum ensembles

The Bullerengue, is a music and dance from the Atlantic coast of Colombia and Panama Darien executed by the current descendants of the Maroons that inhabited this region.

The word "bullerengue" means maternity pollerón or skirt, where the current survival customs were created.

In the black cultural environment, it is defined as a dance of only women, of undoubtedly African ancestry, apparently not attached to customary rituals of Palenque de San Basilio, forming part of the acts of initiation of girls to puberty.

The pace is well marked, autonomous, purely African, executed by drums, without any reference to the melody. The young women enter the yard in a row, clapping with their hands up, with a short step, similar to the cumbia and in an upright position. There are several figures, using the skirts, symbolizing the offering of fertility.

The music includes a female drum or cheerful drum, accompanied by a male ollamador drum which carries the pace, also a totuma with a broken china plate on the inside. and the palms of the chorus accompanying the music.

At the vocal level, bullerengue is led by a master of ceremonies and his singing is based on the narration of a story through questions and answers in tenths and fragmented lines.

Instruments: Caller Drum (male), Cheerful Drum (female), Tambora, Guache.

During slavery, a prince named Benkos Bioj6 came (to Colombia), and he rebelled and started a maroon movement, which took place in the 1600s. He went into the area around Cartagena, to a place called Los Montes de Maria, where he organized maroon armies which fought for their liberation and got established and liberated a place called La Matuna, which is modern day San Basilio de Palenque, renowned for being the first free region in the Americas before Haiti; (in Palenque) they maintained the Bantu (language) or their regional dialect, as well as their religion, their music and, in general, their culture. That's how Palenque became the birthplace of bullerengue around Cartagena , and of many other Afro-Colombian genres. The man who became king Benkos Bioj6, is known in Colombia as a hero and a symbol of resistance, culture and the leader of the liberation of San Basilio de Palenque.

El bullerengue is one rhythm which people associate with cumbia. Traditionally, cumbia music was entirely instrumental with no lyrics. It consisted of either of the two conjuntos and the dance described above. The core rhythm and beat is that "Zambian" sound of cumbia. Yet unlike traditional cumbia, el bullerengue, has always had vocals. One reason many associate bullerengue with cumbia is how bullerengue developed its dance. During cumbia festivals, pregnant women (or women who were suspected of being pregnant) were not allowed to participate because of the fear of "stressing the fetus." Women who stayed at home while their husbands attended the festivals, decided to dance in secret. They danced an altered form of cumbia. They moved with their hands at their side, as opposed to holding their arms high carrying lit candles like they did in cumbia. Also unlike cumbia whose dress flatters a woman's waist line, the clothing worn dancing el bullerengue looked like nightgowns that ballooned at the waist. These costumes were that modeling maternity clothes (Morales 207).

Steeped in **Caribbean** culture, bullerengue was first heard amid the small towns of **Bolivar** and **Cordoba** counties in northern Colombia and was initially performed by housebound pregnant women unable to attend village dances and festivals.

It's not as popular or commercial as "cumbia," the country's most notable folk music, but according to Martinez, bullerengue is catching on.

"Since a few years ago, young musicians in Colombia have become interested in playing [bullerengue] and including traditional instruments such as [gaitas](#), [tambours](#) and accordions into their music," [Petrona] Martinez says.

"Also, they have learned the lyrics from old songs and re-made them into new versions. Colombian commercial music is going through a great moment ... all because of the young who are starting to appreciate their roots."

In Martinez's village, which is situated near **San Basilio de Palenque**, or "**Land of the Slaves**," bullerengue melodies are passed down through the generations. Martinez gleaned much of what she learned from her grandmother and great-grandmother, but most of the songs she sings today are her own.

The bullerengue beat is slower than that of cumbia but it provides more than just a pulse. In bullerengue, the beat is everything.

Bullerengue drummers typically encircle a "cantadora," or lead female vocalist, who simply must have rhythm.

Audio/Video Files - Bullerengue

Grupo Coral Sociedad de Mejoras Públicas

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyZ0nahda5o&feature=related>

Coro de la Escuela Superior Dr. Pila de Ponce, Puerto Rico

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvgHpebPLgM&feature=related>

Festival Internacional Val Pusteria Italia (with instrumentals)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zkJFDO1MZJ74&feature=related>

Unknown Chorus <http://video.aol.com/video-detail/bullerengue/213569071>

Unknown Chorus and Orchestra http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smHwfkA_jYE

Unknown Chorus <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsZ9RGKBvUk&feature=related>

Bullerengue Dance <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFJNIOutiaM&feature=related>

Bullerengue Dance <http://www.truveo.com/Bullerengue-Zilkha-Hall/id/186039920>

Bullerengue Music <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiF937CPeTs&feature=related>

Festival Nacional del Bullerengue

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1G8w3Q51VaI&feature=related>

Bullerengue Lyrics

Si you fuera tambo, mi negra, si you fuera tambo
Bullerengue, bullerengue, ua, bullerengue, bullerengue ua
Si maraca fuera yo, sonara sola pa ti
Pa ti maraca y tambo pa' ti mi negra pa' ti
Quisiera b obveme gaita y sona solo pa'ti
Bullerengue, bullerengue, aa, bullerengue, bullerengue, ua
Pa'ti, solita pa'ti, pa'ti, mi negra, pa'ti
Y si fuera tamborito, currucutearia bajito
Bajito, pero bien bajito, pa' que bailaray pa'mi
Pa'mi, mi near, pa'mi, pa'mi, na'ma' que pa'mi, pa'mi
Pa'mi, mi negra, pa'mi, pa'mi, na'ma, que pa'mi, pa',mi

English Translation

If I would be a drum, my dear, if I would be a drum
Bullerengue, bullerengue, ua, bullerengue, bullerengue ua
If I would be a maraca, I would only play for you
For you, maraca and drum, for you, my dear, for you
I would want to be transformed into a drum, and to only sound for you, Oh!
Bullerengue, bullerengue, aa, bullerengue, bullerengue, ua
For you, only for you, for you, my dear, for you
And if I would be a little drum, I would currucucu very softly
Softly, indeed very softly, so you would dance for me
For me, my dear, for me, for me, only for me. For me.