



**TRADITIONS:
A CELEBRATION
OF LATIN &
CARIBBEAN
MUSIC.**



WELCOME

Traditions exist wherever people live. They speak of the past, but are elements of the future. Folkways have the power to tell us much about others, if only we listen. The folklife of south Florida reflects the diversity of those people who make their home here. In that diversity is our strength.

The Historical Museum of Southern Florida is extremely pleased to sponsor **Traditions: The South Florida Folklife Festival**, as well as the ongoing folklife program at the Museum. Helping south Floridians discover and experience the traditions of our community is enjoyable indeed.

Randy F. Nimnicht
Executive Director
Historical Association of
Southern Florida

TRADITIONS: A CELEBRATION OF LATIN AND CARIBBEAN MUSIC

INTRODUCTION

Stretching from Lake Okeechobee to Key West, south Florida encompasses a variety of tropical environments which have influenced the life of its residents. The most important determinant of the south Florida experience, however, is the variety of people who have made this region their home. South Floridians have roots in the Americas, Africa, Europe, and Asia. Their folklife reflects this heritage, while their interaction with the environment has imbued it with a unique tropical cast.

Folklife is the manifestation of traditional knowledge and includes such

diverse categories as belief, custom, art, craft, music, foodways, dance, drama, play, occupational skill, architecture, and storytelling. Such expressions often acquire a distinctly local character through the influences of geography, history, or talented individuals within the folk group. Folklife ranges in form and execution from the daily, almost unnoticed aspects of life to the highest artistic expressions that have arisen from a long history of cultural achievement.

Traditions: The South Florida Folklife Festival is an annual event which presents examples of folklife from a diverse cross-section of south Florida residents. The festival is based on months of research into traditional culture in south Florida. This year, in addition to arts and foodways demonstrations, workshops, and documentary films that present examples of folklife from a variety of groups, Traditions will emphasize Latin American and Caribbean music in south Florida.

The dramatic influx of peoples from the Caribbean and Latin America has played a dominant role in south Florida's musical culture. Music is an important ingredient in the lives of these communities. It serves as a buffer to a strange environment, a

source of entertainment, a reason to socialize, a part of religious observances, and a symbol of cultural identity. The types of music featured in Caribbean and Latin American clubs, radio stations, and restaurants include Jamaican **reggae**, Puerto Rican **salsa** and **plena**, Cuban **guajiro** and **charanga**, Haitian **compas**, Trinidadian **calypso** and **soca**, Mexican **mariachi** and **nortena**, and many other styles. Taken together, these musical traditions have made south Florida one of the most musically exciting places in the United States.

Traditions is sponsored by the Historical Association of Southern Florida and is made possible through the generous support of the Metro-Dade Cultural Affairs Council, Dade County Board of Commissioners, National Endowment for the Arts—Folk Arts Division, Florida Arts Council, Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs, and Halcyon, Ltd.

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Editor : Dr. Tina Bucuvalas
Layout and Design:
George Chillag
Tim Schmand



LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN MUSIC IN SOUTH FLORIDA

*Dr. Dale A. Olsen,
Professor of Ethnomusicology,
Florida State University*

INTRODUCTION

The population of South Florida probably includes people from all the countries south of the United States. These peoples may speak any one or more of the languages found "south of the border," including Spanish, Portuguese, French, English, Dutch, Maya, and Quechua, and their homelands may include the Caribbean basin, South America, Central America, and Middle America. South Florida is a microcosm of Latin American and Caribbean diversity, if not, indeed, much of the world. Yet, certain cultures stand out in south Florida because of their numerical dominance, and the musics of these groups have become stereotypes of Latin American and Caribbean expressive culture. The 1988 Traditions Folklife Festival will present some of these dominant musical forms, such as **salsa** and **reggae**, and will also feature numerous forms that are known more to the carriers of the traditions than to the public at large, such as **marimba**, **punto**, **guajiro**, and others.

In spite of the diversity of Latin American and Caribbean cultures, there were several historical elements which unified them: first were the Native American populations which, although themselves diverse, contributed one layer, perhaps the foundation, to the cultural profile; second were the slaves from Africa and their

descendants; and third were the Europeans, primarily the Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English. The sheer numbers of these populations is staggering. It is estimated, for example, that nearly 45 million Native Americans existed in pre-Conquest Latin America, compared to only about 5 million in North America. Likewise, the numbers of African and African-descended slaves in Latin America far exceeded the numbers in North America, with as many as 12 million blacks brought to the former compared to about 3 million to the latter. What these populations, plus the Europeans, gave to Latin American and Caribbean music is often obscured by their racial and cultural mixing. Nevertheless, one can still refer to the present musical types by combining their cultural origins, at least as a point of reference, and indicating the present geographic location where the musical types first occurred.

The following essay is organized by establishing five categories: (1) African-French derived Caribbean music, (2) African-Spanish derived Caribbean music, (3) African-British derived Caribbean music, (4) Native American-Spanish derived Latin American music, and (5) Spanish derived Latin American music. These categories are basic to an understanding of many of the musical traditions found in South Florida.

AFRICAN-FRENCH DERIVED CARIBBEAN MUSIC

The main geographic origin of the music in this category is Haiti, although other French speakers from the French Antilles are found in Miami.

The primary musical forms that accompanied the multitudes of Haitians who migrated to south Florida were religious and popular, and the second of these forms has entered into the auditory senses of many Miamians through radio and night life. This popular music and dance form is known by several names, especially **compas** and **mini-jazz**. Originally a big-band style of meringue dance music, compas was begun in Haiti in the 1940s by Nemours Jean Baptiste. Added to this were the American influences of jazz and rock, and the result became the recent electrified mini-jazz bands such as Tabou Combo, Magnum, Odyssey II, and Les Doyens. Another more recent musical ingredient in Haitian popular music is a West African style of electric guitar playing. This electric sound, joined with Haitian-styled drumming, African-derived leader and chorus singing (responso-rial style), occasional use of trumpets and/or other wind instruments, and vocals in French and Creole, makes mini-jazz a loud and rhythmically driving style that is very danceable.

Haitian popular music is not only a phenomenon of Miami and Port au Prince. One must think in terms of a "Caribbean Triangle" when trying to understand the entertainment role of mini-jazz, as well as salsa and other popular musics, because many of the top musical groups shuttle between New York City, Miami, and their Caribbean country of origin for purposes of recording and "jobbing" (performing for money).



AFRICAN-SPANISH DERIVED CARIBBEAN MUSIC

Certainly the largest segment of the Latin American population in the greater Miami area is Cuban. There are several types of music that represent Cuban culture from the rural areas to the urban. These include the **punto guajiro**, the **guiro** ensemble, and **salsa**. It is difficult in these genres to precisely define musical characteristics that are purely Native American, African or Spanish because Cuba, like much of Spanish-speaking Latin America, is a racial and cultural mixture of those ethnic strains. Nevertheless, the first musical form perhaps displays the most Spanish elements, the second the most African, and the last reveals a mixture of the three.

About the **punto guajiro** Sommers writes the following: "The heritage of Renaissance Spain lives on in the **punto guajiro**, one of many Latin American musical verse forms. In the **punto guajiro**, a singer/poet improvises themes of love, comic double entendre, and episodes of daily life, often preserving the classical Spanish rhyme scheme. Occasionally, singers may engage in song duels, or competitions of improvisatory skill." Music with this type of function is found throughout Latin America in Brazil, Chile, Venezuela, and beyond, and although the music does not reveal it, similar functions for music were and are still found in West Africa. The term "**guajiro**" usually refers to the white peasant in the Caribbean, where the **punto guajiro** type of song form is found throughout the Spanish-settled areas.

The musical instruments used in **punto guajiro** also reveal ethnic mixtures. The **tres** is a Cuban type of Spanish guitar using three sets of double or triple strings; the **claves** are two wooden sticks struck together, reminiscent of an African bell because of their function as a time keeper; and the **guiro** is a serrated gourd that is scraped, derived either from a Native "**guajiro**" usually refers to the white peasant in the Caribbean, where the **punto guajiro** type of song form is found throughout the Spanish-settled areas.

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As a tradition displaying African roots, the **guiro ensemble** is often featured in observances associated with **Santeria** (known as **Lucumi** in Yoruba), a syncretic religion that blends West African with Catholic beliefs and practices. Foremost in the religious practice is the communication between mortals and saints, known as **orisha** in the religiously retained Yoruba language of Nigeria. Through rhythms performed with drums or rattles, and songs using responsorial patterns, the musicians and dancers communicate with the saints. Most of this music displays strong African retentions. **Guiros**, or **atcheres**, are nearly identical to West African rattles

made from hollowed gourds (the term "**guiro**" means gourd, and is not to be confused with the similarly named gourd scraper of the **punto guajiro** ensemble discussed above) that are covered by a net. The strands of the net are threaded with dried seeds which, when shaken, strike against the dried gourd and produce swishing as well as percussive sounds. Also known as **chekeres**, the rattles are played in groups of three, and each instrument is a different size. The musicians interlock and interweave their individual rhythmic patterns and improvisations in such a way as to produce a complex fabric of sound, reminiscent of African musical ensembles.

Salsa is a unique mixture of African and Spanish musical elements, in which the final result is very danceable. One might use the word "hot" to describe this music, and that is why

the term "**salsa**," which means "hot sauce," was chosen. During the past several decades, **salsa** has been the dominant musical expression of the urban centers of the Afro-Spanish Caribbean, including not only those in Cuba and Puerto Rico, but also the Latin neighborhoods of New York City and Miami. Its influence is felt in much of Spanish-speaking Latin America, including Peru, Venezuela, Panama, Mexico, and elsewhere.

The basic pulse of **salsa** is four, within which the **claves** strike two



SATURDAY, APRIL 23

MAIN STAGE

11:00-11:30	Sunshine Junkanoo Band
11:30-12:00	K'anil/Guatemalan Maya Marimba
12:00-12:30	Mariachi Jalisco/Mexican Mariachi
12:30-1:00	Zero Crew/Reggae
1:00-1:15	Sunshine Junkanoo Band
1:15-2:00	Emigdio Ortiz y su Conjunto Vallanato Colombiano
2:00-2:30	K'anil/Guatemalan Maya Marimba
2:30-3:00	Mariachi Jalisco/Mexican Mariachi
3:00-4:00	Toto Necessite et Les Doyens/Haitian Compas
4:00-5:00	Alex Leon y los Leones de la Salsa

WORKSHOPS

Historical Museum, LaPlaza Theater

11:30-12:00	Liliane Nerette Louis/Haitian Storytelling
12:30-1:00	Manuel Albalate/Venezuelan Yare masks
1:30- 2:00	Minnie Bert/Miccosukee culture
2:30-3:00	Nancy Perez Moss/ Salsa dance class
3:30-4:00	Dale Olsen & Nestor Torres/Latin & Caribbean musical traditions

FOODWAYS DEMONSTRATIONS

12:00	Angie Scales/Afro-American
1:00	Liliane Nerette Louis/Haitian
2:00	Aida Rancel/Puerto Rican
3:00	Joan Schwartz/Jewish
4 :00	Karl Harty/Jamaican

FOLKLIFE FILMS

Main Library Auditorium, 1 pm

"Say Amen, Somebody,"
Black gospel, 1982, 100 minutes

ARTS DEMONSTRATIONS

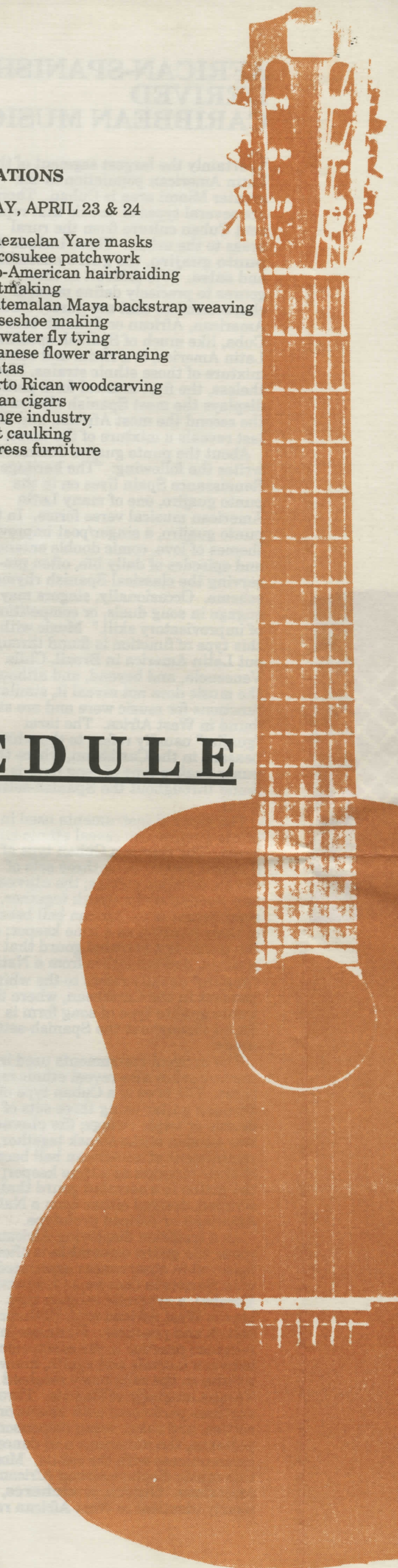
SATURDAY & SUNDAY, APRIL 23 & 24

Manuel Albalate	Venezuelan Yare masks
Minnie Bert	Miccosukee patchwork
Theola Bright	Afro-American hairbraiding
Jose Der Dau	Bootmaking
Florencia Diaz	Guatemalan Maya backstrap weaving
Brian Hutton	Horseshoe making
Don Ingram	Saltwater fly tying
Mieko Kubota	Japanese flower arranging
Marucha Leon	Pinatas
Jose Orta	Puerto Rican woodcarving
Rafael Ozambela	Cuban cigars
Enrique Quintero	Sponge industry
Joe Rickard	Boat caulking
Robert Rudd	Cypress furniture

SCHEDULE

- 1 INFORMATION
- 2 FOODWAYS DEMONSTRATIONS
- 3 TENT - FOLK ARTISTS
- 4 TENT - FOLK ARTISTS
- 5 TENT - FOLK ARTISTS
- 6 TENT - FOLK ARTISTS
- 7 MAIN STAGE
- 8 HISTORICAL MUSEUM
LA PLAZA THEATER
- 9 MUSEUM GIFT SHOP
- 10 FOOD VENDORS
- 11 MAIN LIBRARY AUDITORIUM

LEGEND



SUNDAY, APRIL 24

MONDAY, APRIL 25,
9 am -1 pm — Student Day

MAIN STAGE

11:00-11:45	Fiesta Guajira/Cuban punto de guijaro
11:45-12:15	Daniel and Alejandra/Argentinian tango and ballads
12:15-12:45	Jesus Rodriguez Group/Venezuelan harp
12:45-1:30	Othello/steel drum calypso and jazz-fusion
1:30-2:00	Daniel and Alejandra/Argentinian tangos and ballads
2:00-2:30	Jesus Rodriguez Group/Venezuelan harp
2:30-3:15	Los Caporales/Mexican Mariachi
3:15-4:00	Ti-shan/Reggae
4:00-5:00	Nestor Torres y su Orquesta Charanga

WORKSHOPS

Historical Museum, La Plaza Theater	
11:30-12:00	Liliane Nerette Louis/Haitian story telling
12:30-1:00	Manuel Albalate/Venezuelan Yare masks
1:30-2:00	Minnie Bert/Miccosukee culture
2:30-3:00	Nancy Perez Moss/ salsa dance class
3:30-4:00	Dale Olsen/ Latin and Caribbean musical traditions

FOODWAYS DEMONSTRATIONS

12:00	Angie Scales/Afro-American
1:00	Liliane Nerette Louis/Haitian
2:00	Aida Rancel/Puerto Rican
3:00	Joan Schwartz/Jewish
4:00	Karl Harty/Jamaican

FOLKLIFE FILMS

Main Library Auditorium, 1 pm

Les Blank Mini-Festival:

"Sprout Wings and Fly," North Carolina fiddler, 1982, 30 mins.

"Garlic Is As Good As Ten Mothers," garlic in various cultures, 1982, 30 mins.

"Always for Pleasure," New Orleans Mardi Gras, 1978, 58 mins.

ARTS DEMONSTRATIONS

Manuel Albalate	Venezuelan kites
Minnie Bert	Miccosukee patchwork
Andy Brian	American folk toy
Theola Bright	Afro-American hair braiding
Jose Der Dau	Bootmaking
Florencia Diaz	Guatemalan Maya backstrap weaving
Brian Hutton	Horseshoe making
Mieko Kubota	Japanese flower arranging
Maria Leon	Pinatas
Rafael Ozambela	Cuban cigars
Enrique Quintero	Sponge industry
Joe Rickard	Boat caulking
Robert Rudd	Cypress furniture
Florette Semigram	Jewish prayer shawls
W. Perrine Senior Center	Afro-American quilting

STAGE

9:00-9:15	Liliane Nerette Louis/Haitian folktales
9:15-9:30	Connie Favret/modern horror legends
9:30-10:00	Jesus Rodriguez/Venezuelan harp
10:00-10:30	Toto Necessite et Les Doyens/Haitian compas
10:30-10:45	Liliane Nerette Louis/Haitian folktales
10:45-11:00	Connie Favret/modern horror legends
11:00-11:30	Jesus Rodriguez Group/Venezuelan harp
11:30-12:00	Daniel and Alejandra/Argentinian tango and ballads
12:00-1:00	Toto Necessite et Les Doyens/Haitian compas

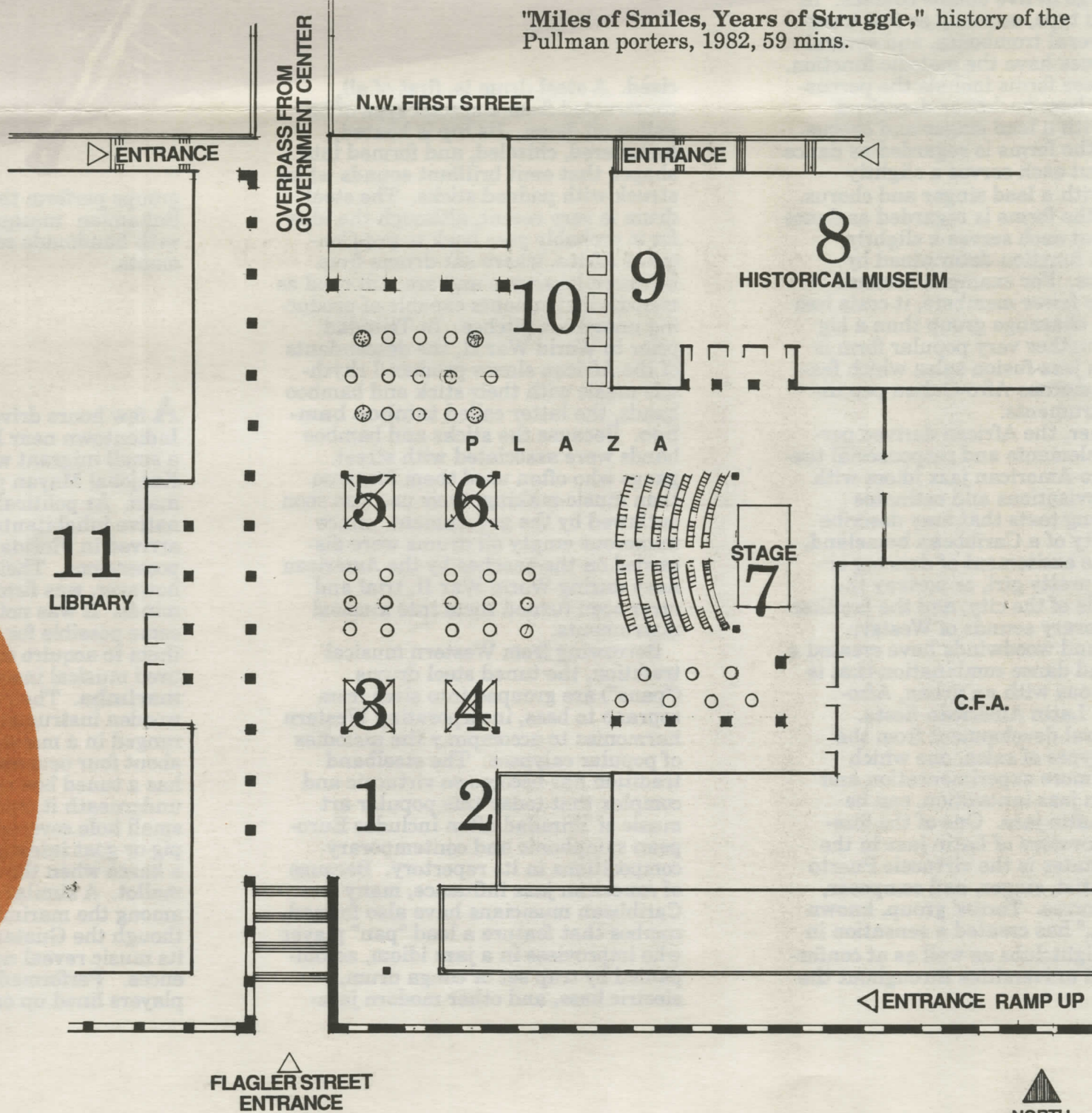
FOODWAYS DEMONSTRATIONS

9:30	Aida Rancel/Puerto Rican
10:30	Joan Schwartz/Jewish
11:30	Liliane Nerette Louis/Haitian

FOLKLIFE FILMS

Main Library Auditorium, 1 pm

"Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle," history of the Pullman porters, 1982, 59 mins.



FLAGLER STREET
ENTRANCE

SITE PLAN

NORTH

against three (long, long, short, short, short) or three against two (short, short, short, long, long). Other musical characteristics are responsorial vocal techniques in which the Cuban son provides the basic song form; extensive use of repeated patterns or ostinatos in the instruments and chorus (many times there are layers of ostinatos being used); heavy percussion often featuring conga drums, timbales, bongos, cowbells, or double bell, and claves; vocal improvisation by the lead singer; instrumental jazz improvisation; a steady bass line which is always slightly ahead of the beat; and extensive use of syncopation. While these characteristics reveal a heavy African influence, the melodic instruments are all European derived.

The instrumentation of salsa is basically determined by three main forms: **charanga**, **conjunto**, and **big band**. In the first type, the main melodic instruments are several violins and a flute. In the second form, which can be translated as "combo," several trumpets or trombones (as in Willie Colon's style, for example) carry the melodies. They are reinforced by the Cuban tres or the Puerto Rican **cuatro**, a guitar-type instrument with

AFRICAN-BRITISH DERIVED CARIBBEAN MUSIC

The so-called British Caribbean includes Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and numerous other islands. Except for the British Virgin Islands, these countries are independent today. Although the common elements of British rule, imposition of the English language, and importation of African slaves would seem to have brought about a unified musical culture in the African-British Caribbean, the opposite is true. Trinidad and Tobago, for example, originated **steelband**, **calypso**, and **soca** (soul calypso), while Jamaica developed **reggae** and its variants. The other islands, likewise, developed their own musics, although the Trinidadian and Jamaican forms have greatly influenced their popular culture.

The origin of steelband is interesting, vague, and probably highly romanti-

rock instruments.

The roots of reggae in Jamaica are quite different from the origins of popular music in Trinidad and Tobago. Reggae grew out of the music and protest philosophy of the Jamaican religious movement known as Rastafarianism, which fused with the musical forms (particularly **ska** and **rock steady**) that developed from the nineteenth century song and dance form known as **mento**. The term "reggay" was first used in Jamaica in 1969, meaning "ragged," everyday, or "regular." A few years later it was Bob Marley who, with the Wailers, firmly established reggae as one of the most popular musical art forms to come out of the Caribbean.

Another African-British tradition found in south Florida is **junkanoo**, a Bahamian masquerade-dance with music. It is performed traditionally during the Christmas season in the British West Indies. Junkanoo was brought to Key West approximately one hundred years ago by Bahamian immigrants, whose descendants still perform junkanoo music and dance, albeit modernized with conga drums, maracas, piano, and electric bass instead of the handmade drums their ancestors used. Miami's junkanoo

ten strings in five double courses. In the third type, as many as five trumpets, several trombones, and several saxophones have the melodic function. All of these forms include the percussion and bass backbone described above, with a lead singer and chorus. Each of the forms is regarded as dance music, but each serves a slightly different function determined by economics. For example, because there are fewer members, it costs less to hire a charanga group than a big band. Another very popular form is **songo**, a jazz-fusion salsa which features numerous Afro-Cuban percussion instruments.

Together, the African derived percussion elements and responsorial texture; Afro-American jazz idiom with its improvisations and ostinatos (riffs); song texts that may describe the beauty of a Caribbean homeland, relate the excitement of dancing or seeing a pretty girl, or portray the tough side of the city; and the familiar contemporary sounds of Western brasses and woodwinds have created a sound and dance combination that is synonymous with an urban, Afro-Spanish, Latin American fiesta.

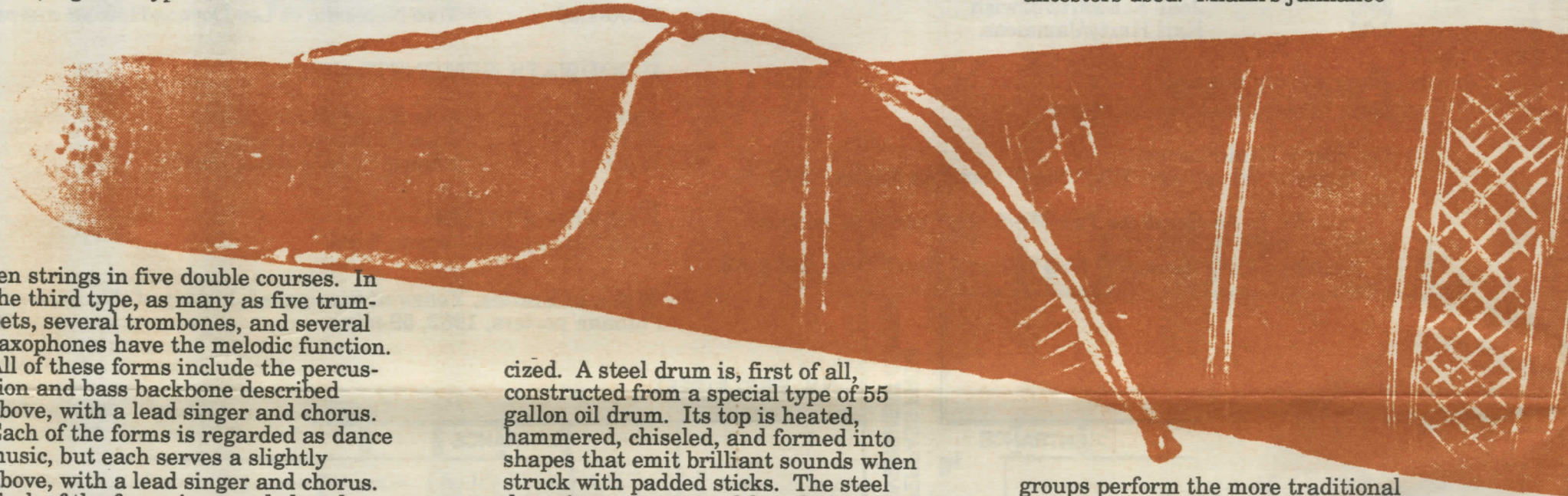
A natural development from the various types of salsa, one which includes more experimentation and American jazz innovation, can be termed Latin jazz. One of the foremost innovators of Latin jazz in the United States is the virtuosic Puerto Rican flutist, singer, and composer, Nestor Torres. Torres' group, known as "Spice," has created a sensation in Miami nightclubs as well as at conferences and universities throughout the country.

cized. A steel drum is, first of all, constructed from a special type of 55 gallon oil drum. Its top is heated, hammered, chiseled, and formed into shapes that emit brilliant sounds when struck with padded sticks. The steel drum is very recent, although the idea for it probably goes back to pre-Conquest Africa, where slit drums from hollowed logs were and are still used as melodic instruments capable of producing numerous pitches. In Trinidad prior to World War II, the descendants of the African slaves produced rhythmic music with their stick and bamboo bands, the latter called **tamboo bamboo**. Because the sticks and bamboo bands were associated with street gangs who often used them for more than music-making, their use was soon outlawed by the government. Since numerous empty oil drums were discarded on the beaches by the American navy during World War II, trial and error soon turned them into musical instruments.

Borrowing from Western musical tradition, the tuned steel drums ("pans") are grouped into sizes from soprano to bass, incorporating Western harmonies to accompany the melodies of popular calypsos. The steelband tradition has become so virtuosic and complex that today this popular art music of Trinidad often includes European symphonic and contemporary compositions in its repertory. Because of American jazz influence, many Caribbean musicians have also formed combos that feature a lead "pan" player who improvises in a jazz idiom, accompanied by trap set or conga drum, electric bass, and other modern jazz-

groups perform the more traditional Bahamian masquerade-dance music with handmade costumes and instruments.

A few hours drive north of Miami, in Indiantown near Lake Okeechobee, is a small migrant worker community of Kanjobal Mayan people from Guatemala. As political refugees these native inhabitants of Middle America arrived in Florida with few material possessions. Their traditional music, however, was firmly etched in their minds. It was not long before it became possible for the musicians among them to acquire one of the most treasured musical instruments, a diatonic **marimba**. Their marimba is a wooden instrument with keys arranged in a major, or diatonic, scale of about four octaves. Each key or slab has a tuned box resonator hanging underneath it, and each box has a small hole covered with a thin piece of pig or goat intestine which buzzes like a kazoo when the key is struck with a mallet. A similar technique is found among the marimbas of Africa, although the Guatemalan marimba and its music reveal no other African influences. Performed by as many as four players lined up on one side of the



instrument, the music varies from popular **sones** to religious songs associated with life cycle events. Because it mixes Native American language and culture, Spanish melodies and harmonies, and African instrumentation, this musical tradition is one of the most unique in Latin America.

SPANISH DERIVED LATIN AMERICAN MUSIC

Latin American music and dance forms that reveal mostly Spanish roots are also found in South Florida. Mexico is represented through several musical traditions, as are Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, and Paraguay.

Perhaps the most popular form of Mexican music is **mariachi**, principally a product of Guadalajara, but found in other areas as well. Originally a rural form, mariachi derives its name from the French word for marriage because it was the basic type of wedding music for European aristocracy.

songs accompanied by the Venezuelan harp, either as a solo instrument or in the trio, are Spanish derived waltzes and lively dances.

Various harp traditions are found elsewhere in Latin America, especially in Paraguay, Vera Cruz in Mexico, Peru, and Ecuador. The styles in Paraguay and Vera Cruz are the most similar to Venezuela. They favor various types of songs and dances in triple and 6/8 meter, the most common Spanish rhythms.

Another musical instrument of European origin is the accordion, found throughout most of Latin America. In Colombia it often joins forces with instruments of other ethnic backgrounds, such as the **bongo** or **caja** (skin drums) of African provenience, and the **guacharaca** or guiro (bamboo or gourd scraper) of Native American or African origin. Such mixtures are often found in the musical ensembles of the Colombian coast, where slavery at one time brought together many diverse cultural traits. Music of this type, such as the **vallanato** style from Barranquilla, is played in small ensembles and is common in the daily lives and celebrations of the peasant farmers.

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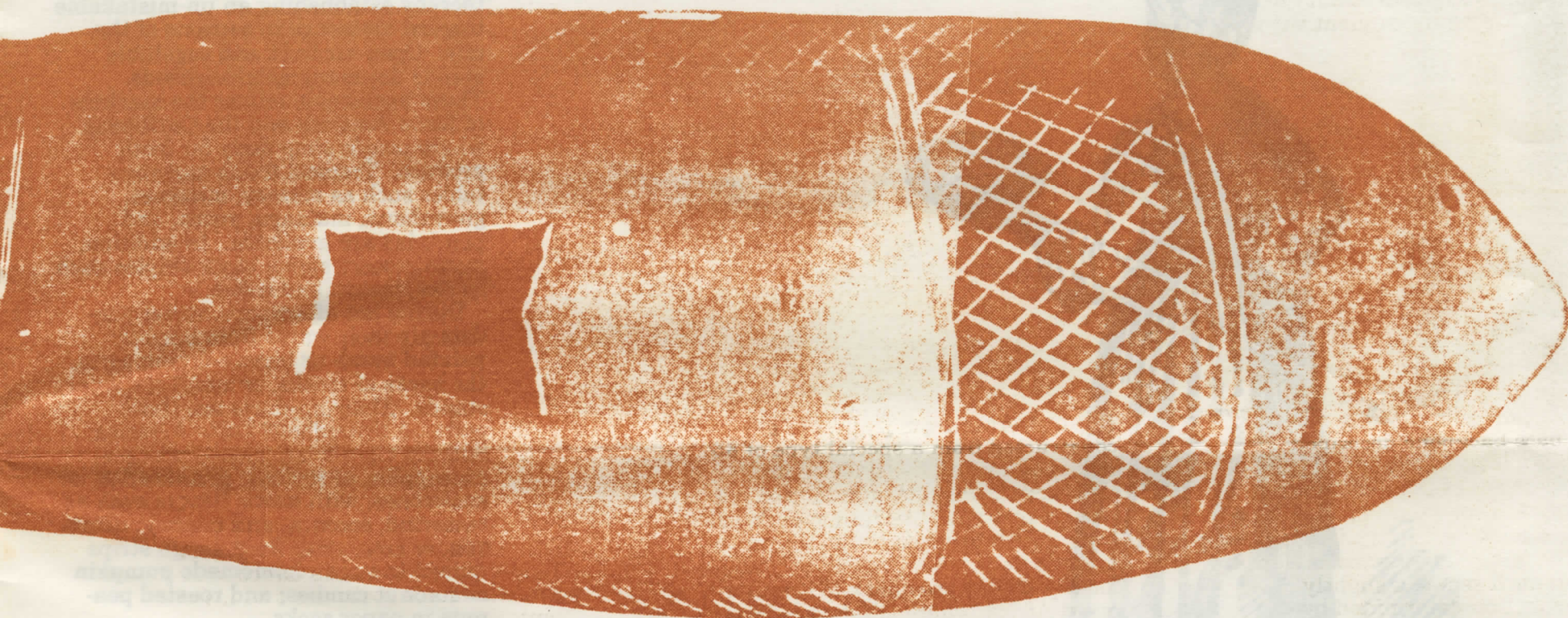
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As one moves further north to the border with Texas, a type of music is found that is called **Tex-Mex**. Influenced heavily by German immigrants, Tex-Mex music uses the accordion, string bass, and other string instruments to accompany the vocals. The music sounds vaguely like polkas from Minnesota, but sung in Spanish.

Central to the folklore of rural Argentina is the **gaucho**, whose domain, the **pampa**, evokes feelings of great loneliness and ruggedness. The gaucho, or cowboy, has come down as one who has conquered the loneliness with his guitar and the ruggedness with his **bolas** (small balls fastened to the ends of a cord, used for hunting and knocking down animals).

Venezuela also has its great plain and grassland, the **llanos**. Whereas the guitar is the instrument par excellence of the Argentinian gaucho, the harp is the pre-eminent musical instrument of the Venezuelan **vaquero**, or cowboy. The harp, an instrument of European derivation, is often accompanied by the small four-stringed European guitar known as the **cuatro**, and a pair of **maracas** of Native American or African derivation. Most of the

NATIVE AMERICAN- SPANISH DERIVED LATIN AMERICAN

CONCLUSION

The music of Latin America and the Caribbean is extremely varied. An attempt to break the forms down into their essential ingredients in order to point to ethnic origins is simply an analytical procedure to try to understand them better. Many of the music and dance forms, however, cannot easily be broken down because their ethnic ingredients have joined and fused, some expanding and others contracting, in such a way that they do not form musical mosaics but rather alloys. Perhaps because of these unique blendings, many of the forms are associated with the nationalistic pride of a particular country or countries. South Florida is fortunate to share in these unique artistic entities, and in the process, gain a deeper understanding of the people who make them.

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FOODWAYS

*Dr. Tina Bucuvalas
Historical Museum of
Southern Florida*



Foodways are more than just recipes. They consist of the production, distribution, selection, and preparation of foods, as well as the social beliefs, customs, and aesthetics surrounding food consumption. Since most foodways are learned outside of formal institutional structures, they are often folk cultural phenomena.

The preparation of traditional foods is an important element in the folklife of any ethnic group. Through this fundamental aspect of life, group members retain strong ties to their folk heritage. In fact, food often serves as a symbol of group identity. This function appears on the national level (apple pie or hamburgers), as well as among regional (grits, barbecue) and ethnic (tamales, chicken soup) groups. As part of **Traditions**, representatives of several different groups—Haitian, Jamaican, Afro-American, Puerto Rican, and Jewish, will demonstrate the preparation of traditional dishes.

People from Latin America and the Caribbean have transported many foods and food events to Miami, thereby establishing an un-mistakable tropical ambience in sections of the city. Open-air fruit and vegetable stands dot many neighborhoods. These businesses mirror the markets of Latin America and the Caribbean where people shop daily for fresh produce. Tropical fruits and vegetables such as mamey, mangoes, guayabana, malanga, yucca, and plantains are available. In addition, small grocery stores stock staples such as rice, beans, and coffee.

During hot afternoons, street vendors ply their wares from brightly painted hand- or bicycle-driven carts, the backs of trucks, or small stationary stands. Their products are those common throughout Latin America and the Caribbean: peeled oranges, pineapples, or melons; **granizados**, or snowcones, with exotic flavors such as tamarind, coconut, and mamey; **churros**, or long, crisp fried dough strips dipped in sugar; homemade pumpkin or coconut candies; and roasted peanuts in paper sacks.

In homes and restaurants, Hispanic and Caribbean peoples continue to cook traditional dishes. Pork, chicken, seafood, fresh fruits and vegetables, rice, and beans form the basis of their diet. These foods are prepared in diverse and delectable ways that vary from country to country.

Aida Rancel, from Puerto Rico, prepares a wide variety of special dishes for family gatherings and other events. Her cooking is regarded as one of the highlights of these occasions. Below is her recipe for one of the dishes most often associated with Puerto Rican cuisine.

Rice with Pigeon Peas (Arroz con Gandules)

1 small onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, diced
1 green pepper, diced
1/4 c. cooking oil
1 c. diced meat from pork ribs, ham, or sausage
3 c. rice
1 15 oz. can pigeon peas
2 large spoonfuls tomato sauce
5 1/2 c. water
1/4 tsp. oregano
1/4 tsp. cumin

Heat oil in a large pan, then add onion, garlic, green pepper, and meat. Saute over low heat 20 minutes. Add spices, rice, pigeon peas, tomato sauce, and water. Cook over medium heat until water boils, then reduce heat and simmer about 15 minutes, or until rice is done.

The Honorable Lucille Ranger-Brown is not only an excellent cook, she also delights audiences with her performances of Jamaican dances and dialect poems. Lucille's mother and grandmother were both accomplished cooks, and she learned many of her recipes from them.

Jamaican Carrot Juice

Jamaican carrot juice is a delicious beverage often served after dinner. Without the rum, it also makes a vitamin-rich drink suitable for young children.

2 lbs. carrots
2 14 oz. cans sweetened condensed milk
2 small cans evaporated milk
2 nutmegs, finely grated
2 Tb. vanilla extract
1 Tb. cinnamon
1/2 c. Jamaican white rum

Steep carrots in water about 1 hour to soften. Scrape, then finely dice them. Puree carrots in a blender, then add 3 cups water. Strain carrots and water through a sieve, taking care to squeeze all the juice out by mashing the pulp remaining in the sieve with a spoon. Add sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk, vanilla, nutmeg, cinnamon, and rum to the carrot juice and serve.

Haitian food is unique among the many cuisines of Latin America and the Caribbean. The French influence, combined with the mildly hot spices, makes it similar to the Creole cuisine of Louisiana. Liliane Nerette Louis is an outstanding Haitian cook. She learned many of the traditional Haitian recipes in her repertoire from her family, then later studied gourmet French cooking in Port-au-Prince and Paris. The following is her recipe for **acra**, or malanga fritters.

Acra

1 large malanga
1 egg yolk
1 tsp. lemon or lime juice
2 cloves garlic
1 Tb. parsley
1/2-1 hot pepper, according to taste
1 Tb. flour
salt and pepper
cooking oil

Peel and grate the malanga. Grind the garlic, parsley, and hot pepper together in a wooden mortar. Stir all the ingredients together, but do not overmix. In a large frying pan, heat about 1 inch cooking oil. Drop spoonfuls of the mixture into the hot oil 1 tablespoon at a time. Fry until golden brown. Remove and place the acras on a paper towel. Serve hot as an appetizer.

Some of the earliest settlers in our area were Afro-Americans from the South. Their traditional foodways are derived from a variety of sources: vegetables such as okra, black-eyed peas, and peanuts that originated in Africa; foods such as chitlins that were among those made available to Blacks during the slavery era; wild greens native to the southern United States; as well as many foods in national circulation.

Angie Scales has lived in Miami most of her life but she learned to cook from her mother, who is originally from South Carolina. The following are recipes she now makes for her children.

Souse

Souse is a thick pork stew with a unique flavor. Packs of pre-cut souse meat can be obtained at local grocery stores.

5 lbs. souse meat (diced pig ears, jowls, and feet)
1/2 bottle white vinegar
1/2 c. lime juice
1/2 diced onion
a few bay leaves
salt and pepper

Mix together ingredients, then put them in a pot with just enough water to cover. Boil about 1 1/2 to 2 hours, then serve in bowls. Cornbread and fried greens would be good accompaniments to this dish.

Fried Greens

5 slices smoked bacon, chopped
1 bunch collard greens
1 large spoonful lard

Wash and chop the greens. Melt the lard in a large pot, then add the bacon. Cook bacon about 5 minutes. Add the greens and cook about 1/2 hour, then serve.

South Florida's Jewish population is the largest outside of New York, swelling to about one million during the season from November to April. Jewish cuisine derives from thousands of years of history and several geographical regions. Some of the foods, such as **latke**, appear in historical accounts. Others have symbolic value. For instance, the sweets served at a wedding signify a sweet life together for the newlyweds. A particularly interesting aspect of Jewish foodways are the ancient dietary laws of the **Talmud**. These laws prescribe the roles of various foods in religious observances, as well as the dietary laws of **kashruth** (fitness).

Joan Schwartz learned to make many traditional Jewish dishes from her family. She now teaches classes in traditional Jewish cooking to children and teenagers at Beth Am School. She contributed the following family recipes.

Chicken Soup

1 fat soup chicken
5 stalks celery
5 carrots
2 parsnips
1 bunch parsley
1 bunch dill (optional)
salt and pepper

Wash and cut up chicken. Put in pot with just enough water to cover. Add salt and bring to boil over high heat. Skim sediment off the top. Wash and chop vegetables. Add to water, cover, reduce heat to low and simmer everything for about 1 1/2 hours. Serve with matzoh balls.

Matzoh Balls

3 eggs
salt
1/2-3/4 c. matzoh meal

Separate eggs, then beat eggwhites until stiff. Mix salt into egg yolks and fold into the whites. Slowly add about 1/2 c. matzoh meal. Let stand 5 minutes to thicken. Add more matzoh meal if batter is not yet stiff. Make into balls about the size of a golf ball. Drop into boiling water to which a chicken bouillion cube has been added. Cover and cook approximately 40 minutes. The matzoh balls should expand to about twice their original size.



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Metro-Dade Cultural Center
101 West Flagler Street
Miami, Florida 33130
(305) 375-1492