



Young People's Chorus of New York City™

Broadcast Listening Guide

Paquito D'Rivera

"Tembandumba"

BACKGROUND:

The Young People's Chorus of New York City launched Radio Radiance™, a collaborative partnership with WNYC New York Public Radio and American Public Media (APM), in 2008. Radio Radiance™ turns YPC's award-winning Transient Glory® Commissioning Series three-dimensional, taking it from stage to radio to cyberspace. Transient Glory® was created in 2000 to commission the country's most eminent composers to write new music and expand the traditional youth chorus repertoire. Radio Radiance™ takes this series and expands it with 21st century technology. Its mission is to develop new audiences for new music by commissioning and performing choral works written or performed specifically for radio, digital media, and the web. This listening guide was created to enrich the experience of listening and heighten one's appreciation of the music.

Radio Radiance™ began as a regional program in New York City, broadcasting performances locally on WNYC New York Public Radio. Podcasts created from these performances and composer interviews were then broadcasted nationally on APM's "Performance Today" in over 90 cities across the country. It is now a national program implemented by other choirs, whose performances are broadcasted by many local stations, with listening guides being utilized in several public schools nationwide.

For more information, please visit www.ypc.org





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National Standards for Music and the Blueprints for Teaching and Learning in the Arts

This listening guide for teachers provides lessons that meet National Standards for Music Education and address all five strands of the Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts in New York City. These guides are available online at YPC's website, and are accompanied by podcasts that feature the music and in-depth interviews with each composer by WNYC host John Schaefer. We hope that by connecting the music to as many subjects as possible, you will open doors and inspire young students to aim high and dream big, just as we try to do at YPC.

By using this lesson plan, your students will be utilizing the national standards for music education:

2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
8. Understanding relationships between music, other arts and disciplines outside the arts
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture. and enjoy music making with an enriched and challenging repertoire.

The Blueprint is a guide for arts educators in New York City public schools that defines five strands of learning: making music; music literacy; making connections; cultural resources; and careers and lifelong learning. We encourage teachers to pick up the fifth strand and discuss with your students how these lessons may inspire them to either pursue music further, or perhaps become poets or astrophysicists.

Each lesson has several sections. The first two provide teachers rudimentary background information on the composer and the music. The "listening to" section offers points of entry to enable teachers to help their students understand and appreciate the music. "Making connections" connects the music to other disciplines, and "Activities" will get students more engaged and appreciate the richness of this experience. Every teacher can modify the lesson according to his or her students' background and abilities, and can add further activities as time and inspiration allow.





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Tembandumba

Paquito D’Rivera

Paquito D’Rivera is a Cuban-born alto and soprano saxophonist and clarinetist, and a noted composer of jazz and traditional Cuban music. He was a founding member of the Orquesta Cubana de Musica Moderna, while at the same time playing both the clarinet and saxophone with the Cuban National Symphony Orchestra, eventually premiering several works by notable Cuban composers with the same orchestra. He was also a founding member and co-director of the innovative musical ensemble Irakere, which brandished an explosive mixture of jazz, rock, classical and traditional Cuban music never heard before. Mr. D’Rivera’s contributions to classical music are equally impressive, including performances with symphonic orchestras worldwide, and tours with the Chamber Jazz Ensemble, the Paquito D’Rivera Quintet, and guitar duo Sergio and Odair Assad. In order to bring Latin repertoire to greater prominence, Mr. D’Rivera has created, championed and promoted all types of classical compositions, including his three chamber works recorded live in concert with Yo-Yo Ma at Carnegie Hall. His works reveal his widespread and eclectic musical interests, ranging from Afro-Cuban rhythms and melodies and influences from his many travels to his classical origins.

“Tembandumba “

The title is inspired by Tembandumba de la Quimbamba, the main character in the poem Majestad Negra (Black Majesty) by Puerto Rican poet Luis Palés Matos. Two rap soloists plus a pair of Cuban claves add contrast and color to the choir. Mr. D’Rivera wrote extra lyrics made of nonsense syllables that add to the rhythm. He said they were the Caribbean version of bebop or scat: “They mean nothing, they mean a lot.” The poem mentions Antilla, Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba and Puerto Rico, and there is a strong pan-Caribbean flavor to the piece, which is based on the claves, the underlying rhythm of Afro-Cuban music. Mr. D’Rivera considers this work his “humble musical tribute to the master poet from Borinquen.”

In this lesson, students will:

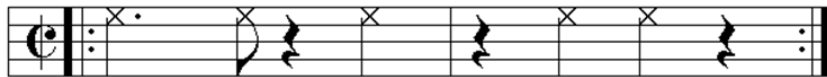
- Play the clave rhythm pattern and use movement
- Learn about Boriqua literature and some literary devices
- Connect the history of Cuba and Puerto Rico with the Spanish empire and the United States

Listening to *Tembandumba*

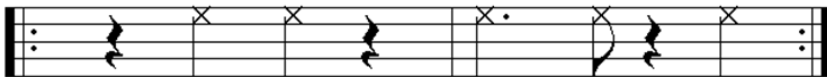
Luis Palés Matos (March 20, 1898–February 23, 1959) was a Puerto Rican poet who created a new kind of literature blending Afro-Caribbean words with Spanish. His poems were mostly about African American people and their social issues. Together with the Afro-Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, he is now known as one of the leaders of the “Negrismo” movement. *Majestad Negra* is a fine example of that movement. It’s about a very attractive African American woman who embodies the entire beauty and richness of Boriquien, the island that the Spaniards would rename Puerto Rico (Puerto Ricans call themselves Boriqua).

Tembandumba is propelled by a very distinct rhythm. Mr. D’Rivera says that the rhythm suggests drums, but it also closely follows the rhythm of the poem. The main element here are the claves. The clave pattern holds the rhythm together in Afro-Cuban music. Mr. D’Rivera says that he used the 3-2”/”2-3 clave concept for Tembandumba. He that this rhythm can be confusing, because in Cuban music, a chord progression can begin on either side of the claves. When the progression begins on the three-side, the song or song section is said to be in 3-2 clave. When the chord progression begins on the two-side, it is in 2-3 clave. No matter what, says Paquito, “you feel it immediately.”

3-2 son clave in two measures of 2/2



2-3 son clave in two measures of 2/2



Within the 3-2/2-3 framework, the harmonic structure is the central focus, rather than the claves. The technique eventually became a staple of composing and arranging in salsa and Latin jazz, but many Cuban musicians say they do not use the 3-2/2-3 system—they just feel it.

Making Connections

Literature

Luis Palés Matos used special techniques in the poem, such as onomatopoeia, to simulate the rhythm of Tembandumba's movements. He also invented a lot of words. You may not know the real meaning of these words, but their sound and context give you a clue and add to the texture of the poem.

Here is *Majestad Negra* in its original language, and a poetic translation in English. Are there words in the English translation you don't understand? Look them up in the dictionary and see if that will help you understand the poem better.

Majestad Negra

by Luis Palés Matos

Por la encendida calle antillana
Va Tembandumba de la Quimbamba
--Rumba, macumba, candombe, bámbula--
Entre dos filas de negras caras.

Ante ella un congo--gongo y maraca--
ritma una conga bomba que bamba.
Culipandeando la Reina avanza,
Y de su inmensa grupa resbalan
Meneos cachondos que el congo cuaja
En ríos de azúcar y de melaza.
Prieto trapiche de sensual zafra,
El caderamen, masa con masa,
Exprime ritmos, suda que sangra,
Y la molienda culmina en danza.

Por la encendida calle antillana
Va Tembandumba de la Quimbamba.
Flor de Tórtola, rosa de Uganda,
Por ti crepitan bombas y bámbulas;
Por ti en calendas desenfrenadas
Quema la Antilla su sangre ñañaiga.

Haití te ofrece sus calabazas;
Fogosos rones te da Jamaica;
Cuba te dice: ¡dale, mulata!

Y Puerto Rico: ¡melao, melamba!
Sus, mis cocolos de negras caras.
Tronad, tambores; vibrad, maracas.

Por la encendida calle antillana
--Rumba, macumba, candombe, bámbula--
Va Tembandumba de la Quimbamba.



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Making Connections

Black Majesty

Down the scorching Antillean street
Goes Tembandumba of the Quimbamba
Between two rows of black faces
--Rumba, macumba, candombe, bámbula.
Before her, a congo band thumps
A bombastic conga—gongos and maracas.
Steatopygously the Queen steps up
And her immense buttocks with drums collide
So that seductive wiggles slide
In curdled rivers of sugar and molasses.
Brown-skinned mill of sweet sensation,
Her colossal hips, those massive mortars,
Make rhythms ooze, sweat bleed like blood,
And all this grinding ends in dance.
Down the scorching Antillean street
Goes Tembandumba of the Quimbamba.
Flower of Tórtola, Rose of Uganda,
For you the bombs and bambulas crackle.
For you these feverish nights go wild
And set on fire Antilla's ñáñiga blood.
Haiti offers you its gourds;
Jamaica pours its fiery rums;
Cuba tells you, give us what you got, mulata!
And Puerto Rico: melao, melamba!
Get down, my black-faced love-crazed rascals.
Jangle, drums, and jiggle, maracas.
Down the scorching Antillean street
Goes Tembandumba of the Quimbamba
--Rumba, macamba, candombe, bámbula.



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History and Geography

Compare the flags of Cuba and Puerto Rico. Do you see any similarities? Do you know why? One reason is that they share a common history: both of them were once part of the mighty Spanish empire.

The Republic of Cuba is an island nation in the Caribbean. Havana is the country's capital. In 1492, Cuba's people, culture, and customs draw from diverse sources, such as the aboriginal Taíno and Ciboney peoples, the Spanish, the African slaves, and the United States. Christopher Columbus found and claimed the island for the Kingdom of Spain. Cuba remained a territory of Spain until the Spanish-American War ended in 1898. It gained independence from the U.S. in 1902. In 1959 the three-year Cuban Revolution removed the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Many people left Cuba when Fidel Castro's communist government took over, and today generations of Cuban exiles live all over the United States, but particularly in New York and Florida.

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States. Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens; however, they may not vote in U.S. presidential elections, but they can elect their own governor. The island's current political status, including the possibility of statehood or independence, is widely debated in Puerto Rico. The original people of Puerto Rico were known as Taínos. Christopher Columbus claimed the island for Spain during his second voyage to the Americas. Under Spanish rule, the island was colonized and the indigenous population was forced into slavery and nearly wiped out due to European infectious diseases. In 1898, Spain ceded the islands to the U.S. after the Spanish-American War.

Slavery in the Spanish colonies began with the enslavement of the local native peoples in their homelands by Spanish settlers. Slavery was rampant and abusive during the first decades of the colonization, costing many thousands of lives through forced labor in mines, and depopulating the West Indies of their native population in a matter of decades. This made colonists require a new source of labor sparking the transatlantic slave trade—bringing in slaves mostly from Africa. This is why there is such a mix of races in the former Spanish colonies. After decades of pressure, primarily from priests and friars who argued that slavery was incompatible with Christianity, the Council of the Indies was created to protect the native people and stop the enforced slavery of the natives. But it took many more years to finally uproot the slave system.

Ask your students how they feel about the slave trade. Is it wrong? Was it necessary? What would have happened if the slave trade didn't exist?





Activities Part I

Activity 1 - Music-making

Try the clave rhythm using two sticks or by clapping your hands. After you practice the rhythm, recite the poem again against this rhythmic background. Do you see how the poem and the claves inspired Mr. D’Rivera’s piece? Can you improvise your own words to the rhythm? What other contemporary musical forms remind you of this technique?

Activity 2 – Language

Onomatopoeia is a word that imitates the sound it represents. It is a Greek word meaning “name-making.” You probably use a lot of onomatopoeia in everyday speech. Here are some examples: splash, buzz, hiss, clang, zip, hiccup, kaboom! It is also used for animal sounds, like moo, meow, bark, and quack. What animal sounds can you make?

Poets like to use onomatopoeia to make us “hear” different kinds of sounds. Read this excerpt of Vachel Lindsay’s *The Congo* aloud. First begin by patsching a slow beat, and then begin reading the poem. The poet uses repetition and a similar device—alliteration, which is the repetition of sounds in the first syllables of words. Can you see how they add flavor and rhythm to his work?

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table,
Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, Boom,
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, Boom.

THEN I had religion. THEN I had a vision.
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

Can you create your own examples of alliteration? Try writing a sentence where every word starts with a B. That’s alliteration!



Activities Part II

Activity 3 - Inventing a language

Try to imitate the poet Luis Pales Matos' style of combining two or more words together to create a new word. This is called a portmanteau word. "Portmanteau" comes from the French porter (to carry) and manteau (cloak). It could also mean a suitcase, or any furniture for hanging up jackets, hats, or umbrellas. It typically combines both sounds and meanings. Examples: smoke + fog = smog. Spanish + English = Spanglish.

Write a short piece about someone you like very much, like your dog, and invent portmanteau words to describe how your dog runs, eats, plays, barks. For example, what word do you get when you combine "bark" and "whine"?

Activity 5 - History and Geography

Locate Cuba and Puerto Rico on a map. Now look for Spain and Africa. Trace the long journey of the conquistadors. Back then, in the 15th century, there were no planes or fast-moving ships to take people from one continent to another. A typical voyage from the edge of Europe to the edge of the Americas took several months. Ship captains figured out a way to make the trip shorter by catching the "trade winds," which blew their ships' sails—and shortened the trip to a mere five months!

Look at a map of South America. This used to be part of the Spanish empire, the most powerful empire in the 15th century. Nearly all the land in South America, except Brazil (which belonged to the Portuguese), was once owned by Spain. Puerto Rico was the last of the Spanish colonies, along with the Philippines. Can you find where the Philippines is? It's in Asia, just below China, which shows you how vast the Spanish empire used to be. Nearly all of the Spanish colonies revolted against Spain in the 19th century and declared their independence, and by 1898, Puerto Rico and the Philippines were the last ones left. That year, the United States defeated Spain during the Spanish-American War. Spain surrendered Puerto Rico and the Philippines to the United States—for the price of \$2 million. But it was little consolation for Spain, because the loss of its last two colonies signaled the end of the Spanish empire.

Activity 6 - Movement

Tembandumba is based on Afro-Cuban rhythms, which means the song is meant for dancing! What kind of dance do you think will fit this music? Can you imagine how Tembandumba dances? Can you imitate it?