



CUBAN SANTERÍA MUSIC MARCO LUTZU



ISTITUTO INTERCULTURALE
DI STUDI MUSICALI
COMPARATI

fondazione ONLUS
GIORGIO CINI

**WORLD MUSIC
LISTENING GUIDES**

INTERCULTURAL MUSIC
EDUCATION COURSES

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**World Music Listening Guides.
Intercultural Music Education Courses**

Editor

Lorenzo Chiarofonte

Editorial Staff

Chiara Picardi and Costantino Vecchi

Graphic design

Multiplo

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Cover image

A *batá* drums ensemble playing during a ritual.
La Habana, 2011. Photo by the author.

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The World Music Listening Guides. Intercultural Music Education Courses aim to provide critical tools for understanding musical diversity. By analysing the dance and music characteristics of pieces belonging to different world music traditions, the guides explore the close relationship between music, culture and society, integrating textual descriptions, images, and multimedia animations created from audiovisual materials held in the IISMC archive. The multimedia animations form the core of the guides and represent their most innovative feature. Designed to function independently of the text, they aim to make the distinctive elements of the musical traditions under study immediately accessible. Each guide concludes with a set of simple exercises intended to assess the knowledge acquired through the texts and animations, which can easily be used as teaching resources by educators.

Starting from significant pieces of a given musical tradition, the guides explore the general aspects of the performance, such as the cultural context, performance practices, instrumental ensemble, song texts, and symbolic elements. The guides also offer the analytical elements needed to understand the formal and syntactic procedures peculiar to each music tradition: metric-rhythmic structures, processes of melodic variation in instrumental and vocal parts, the relationship between music and sung verse, tuning systems, methods of combining parts, and the interaction between music and dance movements. Organised according to progressive levels of complexity, the educational materials presented in the various guides are intended to provide students and teachers with a support for intercultural music education, and address a wide audience, including those with no prior expertise.

The listening guide *Cuban Santería Music*, created by Marco Lutz, explores the role of the rhythms of the *batá* drums in ceremonies for invoking the *orichas*, the deities of the *Santería* religion. The audiovisual materials presented in these pages come from recordings made during the event *Batá drums in the Cuban Santería*, organised by the IISMC in 2016 as part of the series *Music and rites*, and are supplemented by additional recordings and images collected by the author in the field. These materials are here reorganised and presented in the form of video animations, which constitute the central element of the guide.

The materials are arranged to alternate between different perspectives, offering a comprehensive overview of the religious practice, the

musical instruments, and the role of music. Following an introductory section, which traces the origins and characteristics of the Afro-Cuban religion of *Santería* and outlines the main figures of the *oricha* pantheon, the *batá* drums immediately take centre stage: a short ethnographic video documentary illustrates the various stages of their construction and the significance they hold in religious practice. In the worship of the *orichas*, the rhythms of the *batá* drums are accompanied by singing and dancing, which play a necessary role in the ritual (*Toque de santo*) to invoke and call upon the deities. Two video animations respectively depict the long introductory instrumental sequence (*orun seco*), composed of rhythmic formulas performed on the drums and dedicated to the different *orichas*, and the short songs performed during the central stages of the ceremony (*orun cantado*). Finally, three multimedia animations analyse the intricate polyrhythmic patterns of the *batá* drums, describing the transitions between different formulas, the ‘conversations’ between the various instruments, and the improvisatory practice. These aspects are presented using a transcription system that allows the viewer to visualise the development of the rhythmic sequence in its various articulations.

The guide closes with a section of four multiple-choice quizzes that, in addition to reinforcing the main themes covered, offer practical suggestions for using the materials in educational activities.

Lorenzo Chiarofonte

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1. Introduction

Santería, also known as *Regla de Ocha*, is the most widespread of Afro-Cuban religions. It is practised in Cuba and other countries by several million faithful and centred on the worship of a group of divinities known as *orichas*. Believers (*santeros*) perform rituals intended to invoke the *orichas* by reciting magical-religious formulas, singing songs, playing instrumental music and dancing.

One of the most significant *Santería* rituals is the *Toque de santo* (see §3 *The Toque de santo ritual*), whose purpose is to encourage the descent of an *oricha* to earth. Music and dance are essential elements of the rite because of their power to induce different states of consciousness in the participants, which believers interpret as temporary possession of the body by an *oricha*.

The music of the *Toque de santo* is provided by *batá* drums, the sacred *Santería* instruments (Fig. 1.1; see §2 *The batá drums*). They are played in an ensemble of three different-sized instruments and follow intricate polyrhythmic patterns dedicated to different *orichas*. The *santeros* attribute great importance to the *batá* drums as they believe their music establishes direct communication between human beings and the supernatural world. Because of their profound religious meanings and the complexity of the repertoires, the ritual music of the *batá* is considered the highest expression of Afro-Cuban musical culture.



Fig. 1.1. *Batá* drums playing during a *Toque de santo*. La Habana, 2011.

The origins of *Santería* date from a period tragically marked by the trade in African slaves, who were deported to Cuba from the second half of the eighteenth century to work in the sugar cane plantations. The phenomenon reached such proportions that in 1846 their African descendants made up more than 40% of the island's population. Many of these slaves were of Yoruba origin, an ethnic-linguistic group settled in what is now Nigeria, Benin and Togo. This forced migration brought about profound economic, demographic and cultural changes, and had a significant social and religious impact. *Santería* emerged in this context as a result of the meeting of the African people's Yoruba religion and the Catholicism brought by the Spanish *conquistadores* (Fig. 1.2).



Fig. 1.2. A priest of the *Santería* (*babalawo*). La Habana, 2011.

The language spoken by the Yoruba in Cuba is known as *Lucumí*. Over the years *Lucumí* has lost its function as a language of everyday communication between the Afro-descendants, but remains the sacred language of *Santería*, used for the prayers and songs dedicated to the *orichas*.

The *Santería* religious system is centred on the concept of *aché*, an invisible, sacred, magical power. *Aché* can be transmitted by a supernatural being to a person, and then on to other individuals. Its distribution in the natural and supernatural world follows a hierarchy on various levels. At the top is Olodumare, the supreme being, whom believers do not address directly. No rites are performed, altars erected or sacrifices made to Olodumare (Fig. 1.3).



Fig. 1.3. *Batá* drums playing during a ceremony. Hanging from the side is an image of Christ representing *Olodumare*. La Habana, 2011.

The *orichas* occupy the second level of the hierarchy. In the traditional Yoruba religion, *aché* is concentrated in nodes of energy associated with natural forces (wind, thunder), places with a particular symbolic value (sea, mountains, rivers) and roles in social life (father, mother, king, warrior). Such forces were personified in the *orichas*.

The Yoruba deported to Cuba found a way of reconciling their polytheist religion with the monotheism of Christianity through the worship of Catholic saints. The result was a system of beliefs in which the *santeros* recognise in each *oricha* the attributes of the Yoruba divinity (such as specific colours, objects, numbers, natural forces, animals and herbs) and of a specific Catholic saint. For example, Orula is associated with St Francis of Assisi, Ogun with St Peter, Ochun with the Virgin of Charity of Cobre, Yemayá with Our Lady of Regla and so on.

Changó, the *oricha* of lightning, fire, amorous passion and male vigour is an interesting case (Fig. 1.4). The colours red and white, the numbers six and twelve, and foods like bananas and maize are associated with this divinity. He is portrayed as a muscular young man holding a double-bladed axe. Changó is associated in *Santería* with St Barbara, known in popular Catholic worship as the protector against fire and

lightning. Consequently, a statue portraying a muscular young man with an axe may be found with a St Barbara dressed in red and white on the altar dedicated to Changó, which every *santero* must set up in his home.



Fig. 1.4. Detail of a fetish for the *oricha* Changó. La Habana, 2011.

The ancestors (*egun*) are one step below the *orichas*. In the *Santería* religious conception, even though they no longer live on earth, the *egun* continue to be part of the family and concern themselves with the lives of their descendants. The *santeros* invoke their ancestors through specific rites and songs; they set up altars and sacrifice animals in their honour.

Human beings are found still further down the hierarchy. Although the *orichas* are supernatural, they rely on the vital energy they receive from believers through the celebration of rites. In return, the *orichas* ensure them of health, wealth and guidance to face life's adversities.

Finally, a certain quantity of *aché* is found in organic and inorganic natural elements, to which believers attribute magical powers. Plants, herbs, seeds and fruit are used to create altars, symbolise life, nourish the *orichas* and consecrate animate and inanimate objects. The *hierberos* (Fig. 1.5), religious practitioners expert in selecting and processing herbs, advise which plants to use in the rituals and prepare medicinal

infusions and other essences for ceremonial purposes. The animal kingdom is equally important. The magical power of animals is derived from their relationship to the *orichas*. Each divinity is associated with specific birds or other small and medium-sized animals, and some rituals require their sacrifice to honour and nourish the divinities, ward off negative influences or obtain benefits.



Fig. 1.5. A *hierbero* sells herbs and other sacred objects at his home. La Habana, 2011.

2. The *batá* drums

The *batá* drums are the main *Santería* ritual instruments. They consist of a body in the shape of an asymmetrical hour-glass, narrowing at about two thirds of their length, with openings of different diameters covered by two skins: the large one is called *enú* and the small one *chachá*.

The *batá* drums are played in an ensemble (*conjuntos*) of three different sized instruments (Fig. 2.1). The smallest is called an *okónkolo*, the middle one an *itótele* and the largest an *iyá* (Fig. 2.2). Two strips of fabric or

leather are attached near the skins of the *iyá*, onto which dozens of small bells are sewn. These ring when the membranes are struck with a certain force, or when the instrument is deliberately shaken, as in the rhythms devoted to the sea divinity, Yemayá, in which the bells evoke the sound of waves.



Fig. 2.1. A *conjunto* of *batá* drums. la Habana, 2011.



Fig. 2.2. Some specimens of *batá* drums and, below, a pair of *güiros*. La Habana, 2011.

Both membranes of the drums are bordered with vegetable fibre rings and held by a tensioning system made up of *tiras*, *cadeneta* and *fajas*. The *tiras* are tension rods arranged in a W that cross the body of the instrument longitudinally. The *cadeneta* extends from the *chachá* to the *enú* following a spiral path that increases the tension of the *tiras*. The *fajas*, often made of leather, enfold both the *tiras* and the *cadeneta*, making them adhere to the narrowest part of the body. During ceremonies, the drums may be coated with skins or fabrics decorated with images referring to different *orichas*.

The *batá* drums used for ritual purposes must have bodies made from a single tree trunk and tension rods in leather or rope. These instruments are made by a restricted number of highly specialised craftsmen, who must not only have technical skills in working wood and leather but also respect strict religious rules. The various stages in the construction of a *conjunto* of *batá* by Lazaro Leiva Martínez, a Havana craftsman specialising in the production of ceremonial instruments, can be seen in

Video 2.1. The ways in which the technical expertise in working the materials is interwoven with the beliefs and ritual procedures emerge during his explanation, clearly showing the sacred nature of these instruments.

2.1 BATÁ DRUMS MAKING

<https://youtu.be/ME-DwWvx9PE?si=nJuE36cCACy453xg>



Only *batá* drums made in strict compliance with the religious requirements can be consecrated. The consecration ceremony is a secret ritual during which, according to the practitioners' beliefs, the instruments receive the *oricha* Aña. From that moment on, the instruments cannot be touched by women or homosexuals. Their use is restricted to male musicians who, through an equally secret ritual, consecrate themselves to the drum divinity to become members of the priestly caste known as *Omo Aña*, the sons of Aña.

Several obligations must also be respected and strict taboos observed in order to play the sacred drums during the *Toque de santo* ritual (see §3). The drums of a single *conjunto* cannot be separated, must never touch the ground and must be kept in the home of the *dueño del tambor* (the owner) or a person he trusts. The *tamboreros* must refrain from sexual relations before playing for a ritual. Like the other *orichas*, Aña is a divinity who requires special attention, with prayers, ritual cleansing with coconut water and periodic animal sacrifices.

Several years training are required to become a professional *batá* drummer. Learning is still mainly by oral tradition, by taking part in ceremonies and listening to other musicians, or relying on the guidance of an expert teacher. The course usually begins with the smallest drum, the *okónkolo*, before moving on to the medium and large drums.

The drummer plays the *batá* seated, resting the instrument on his legs and beating the larger skin with his right hand and the smaller one with his left (Fig. 2.3). To ensure that the drum does not fall, a band fixed to the ends of the instrument is passed under the musician's thighs. The larger skin of the *iyá* and the *itótele* may be struck with two different beats (*golpes*). In the *golpe abierto* (open beat) the hand is raised immediately after it has hit the skin, letting this resonate, while in the *golpe tapado* (blocked beat) the fingers are left resting on the membrane, dulling its vibration.



Fig. 2.3. *Iyá* player. La Habana, 2011.

3. The *Toque de santo* ritual

The *Santería* religious practice is centred mainly on the worship of the *orichas*. The *Toque de santo* ritual is addressed to them, allowing the divinities to be invoked through singing, dancing and the rhythm of the *batá* (see §2). The presence of the sacred drums is fundamental, such that the ceremony as a whole is often known as *Tambor*.

A *Toque de santo* may be celebrated to commemorate an anniversary, invoke favours, ask for help in facing some difficulty or give thanks for goodness received. The music and dance favour the attainment of a different state of consciousness by one or more participants in the rite, which believers interpret as possession of the body by an *oricha*.

The ceremony is usually organised by a believer at his or her own home. Throughout the rite, the house takes on the value of a temple in which each room has a specific function. The *igbodu* is the sacred room where the *trono* is set up, a kind of altar adorned with coloured fabrics,

flowers, fruit, food and objects related to the *oricha* one wishes to invoke (Fig. 3.1). The *eyá aranla* is the place where the public part of the ceremony is held. It is the largest room in the house, usually a lounge or patio. There is then a third, more secluded room called the *cuarto del santo*. Its use is restricted to the *Santo*, the believer who, having entered into trance, is thought to have been possessed by the *oricha*.



Fig. 3.1. *Batá* drums perform an *orun seco* in front of the throne. La Habana, 2011.

Although taking place in a private house, the *Toque de santo* is an inclusive religious celebration. Its instigator usually invites the members of his own religious family to take part, along with relatives, friends and neighbours. The presence of some religious practitioners is also needed to ensure the success of the rite: professionals of the cult who are paid for their services. Along with the *batá* drummers, the *awpon* and *bailarín* are also of fundamental importance.

The *awpon* may be a man or a woman, whose role is to sing the songs during the ceremony. However, he or she is not a simple singer. Even prior to vocal gifts, the *awpon* is chosen for his or her knowledge of the songs suited to the different stages of the rite. His or her function is that of a master of ceremonies who, through song, coordinates the ritual

actions and controls the process that will lead to entrance into trance.

The other indispensable figure for the success of the rite is the *bailarín* (or *bailarina*, when it is a woman). Despite the name, in this case, too, he or she is not a simple dancer. His or her main characteristic is that of being a *caballo de santo* (saint's horse), that is, having a predisposition and the necessary knowledge for receiving a spirit into his or her own body. In theory, any *santero* can be possessed by an *oricha*, but during a *Toque de santo* the *bailarín* is usually the person who is first to reach the deepest state of trance and assume the role of the *Santo*.

The *Toque de santo* is divided into five clearly distinct parts.

Orun seco is the initial part of the ritual, held in the *igbodu*, the throne room. The three *batá* players sit here in front of the altar to perform a long series of rhythmic figures dedicated to twenty-four different divinities. The *orun seco* is regarded by believers as one of the most sacred moments of the entire *Toque de santo*.

When the *orun seco* is completed, the *batá* players move to the main room, where participants stand in front of the instruments to begin the *orun cantado* (Fig. 3.2). In this part, the drums accompany the *awpon*, who sings cycles of songs in *Lucumi* dedicated to the twenty-four *orichas*, following the same order as in the *orun seco*. The solo voice alternates with a choir made up of the *tamboreros* and all the participants in the rite, who sing and dance at the same time. When the *awpon* sings the songs for a given *oricha*, all the *santeros* consecrated by him bow before the drums to pay homage to Aña (see §4).



Fig. 3.2. A *santera* salutes the drums accompanying the song for the *oricha* to which she is consecrated during an *orun cantado*. La Habana, 2011.

The *llamada al santo* (Fig. 3.3) begins when the *orun cantado* has been completed. In this part the *awpon* sings a long sequence of songs dedicated to the *oricha* in whose honour the ceremony is being held (Fig. 3.4). All those present take an active part, singing, dancing and clapping their hands in time to invoke the descent of the *oricha* to earth. If the call is successful, the *bailarín* approaches the drums dancing more and more excitedly. When he lies down on the ground in front of the drums it is a sign that possession has taken place. The music suddenly stops and from that moment on the *bailarín* is considered the earthly incarnation of the *Santo*.



Fig. 3.3. Songs and dances during the *llamada al santo*. La Habana, 2011.



Fig. 3.4. The *awpon* incites the ritual participants during the *llamada al santo*. La Habana, 2011.

The process that leads to the entrance into trance is sacred and secret, which is why many *santeros* do not allow it to be filmed and made public. In keeping with their wishes, only a few photos of the initial stages of the possession are shown in this guide (Fig. 3.5).



Fig. 3.5. A *Santera* shows the first signs of possession during a ceremony. La Habana, 2010.

Once possession has taken place, the *Santo* is accompanied to the room reserved for him, where believers offer him food and drinks. After having donned the garments and accessories that identify the *oricha* invoked, the *Santo* assembles some of those present to dispense good advice and request the performance of further rites. In the meantime, the *wemilere* begins in the main room. This is a kind of religious celebration during which the *awpon* continues to sing songs dedicated to the *orichas*, always accompanied by the drums. The participants sing, dance and enjoy themselves (Fig. 3.6).



Fig. 3.6. Collective singing and dancing during the *wemilere*. La Habana, 2011.

The final part of the rite, the *cierre*, begins when the *Santo* ends the consultations and goes back to the main room. From this moment on, the drums play a succession of *toques* dedicated to the *orichas* and the ancestors (*egun*). A bucket containing an infusion of water and magical herbs thought able to capture the negative influences is hidden in a corner of the house at the start of the ceremony. During the *cierre* the bucket is taken into the main room, twirled before the *iyá* and emptied outside the house. At the end of this last ritual act, the *awpon* sings two brief song cycles in honour of Eleguá and Olokun, thus marking the end of the *Toque de santo*.

4. *Orun seco* and *Orun cantado*

The music of the *batá* drums consists of rhythmic figures called *toques*. Each *toque* is an overlaying of the parts played on the six skins of the *conjunto*. In its basic form, a *toque* is presented as a short, cyclically repeated sequence.

The *orun seco*, played at the start of the *Toque de santo* (see §3), is the most fascinating part of the *batá* repertoire. It is a long instrumental suite in which *toques* dedicated to twenty-four different *orichas* are played. One or more *toques* are associated with each *oricha*. The succession of the *orichas* follows strict religious rules, while the length of each *toque* can vary. It is up to the *iyá* player, the instrument that leads the ensemble, to decide when to move from one *toque* to the next.

Video 4.1 shows an *orun seco* played during a ceremony held in Havana on 29 June 2011, of which the *toques* dedicated to the first four *orichas* are presented: Eleguá, Ogun, Ochosi and Obaloke. Each *oricha* is associated with a variable number of *toques*, identified by names in the *Lucumí* language. Three *toques* are played for Eleguá, called *Latopa*, *Bobo Araye* and *Abukenke*; one *toque* for Ogun and Obaloke, while that for Ochosi, called *Agueré*, is divided into seven sections.

4.1 ORUN SECO

<https://youtu.be/HFnqwTqDj-c?si=9YMxoGqw8tDPW9H7>



In the central parts of the ceremony, known as *orun cantado*, drums accompany the singing. Dozens of songs in *Lucumí* are handed down for each divinity. These are usually short and arranged into cycles dedicated to the same *oricha*.

The *awpon*, the master of ceremonies, must select the songs to be sung, considering both the religious aspects (like the content of the lyric or the part of the ritual), and the musical ones. The songs that accompany the more excited *toques* are usually proposed at the end of a cycle.

The length of a song cycle may vary according to the participants' reactions and the effects it has on those showing signs of possession. The *awpon*, as master of ceremonies, is free to alter the length of the song cycle, lengthening the songs if required or introducing new ones.

The songs dedicated to the *orichas* have a responsorial form, with the alternation of solo voice and choir. The choral parts are usually fixed and known by heart by the believers taking part in the ceremonies, while the novices learn to sing them by imitation. The soloist, however, enjoys a certain freedom of improvisation. Starting from known melodies and lyrics, the *awpon* proposes rhythmic and melodic variations that allow him to assert a personal style. The lyrics can also be varied; for example, the songs intended for a male *oricha* are often preceded by or interspersed with the invocation *babá* (father), while those for a female divinity contain the invocation *iyá* (mother).

Video 4.2 presents some examples of songs sung during an *orun cantado*, dedicated to the *orichas* Eleguá, Babalu Aye and Orula. The lyric in *Lucumi*, the transcription of the choral part on the score and the melodic outline of the *awpon*'s intonation are given for each song.

4.2 ORUN CANTADO

<https://youtu.be/SLzl4kHg4qg?si=tCKnekX0p4fuQjTs>



5. Listening to the *batá* drums

To fully appreciate the music of the *batá* drums, it is necessary to invert our listening habits. Whereas in most Western music the solo part is usually played on a treble instrument, the opposite occurs in the *batá*. The *conjunto* is led by the player of the *iyá*, the instrument with the lowest sound, on which the other players and the listeners focus their attention. Some Cuban musicologists have noted that the presence of the soloist on the bass is a common feature of several Caribbean musical genres of African origin.

One of the main tasks of the *iyá* player is to introduce the various *toques* and lead the transition from one to another. Each *toque* may be 'called' by the playing of a formula known as a *llamada*. Each *toque* has its own *llamada*, whose rhythmical configuration allows the other two players to synchronise with the beat.

However, in the *orun seco*, the *toques* are played one after the other

without interruption. In this case, the *vire* is used, a short rhythmic figure played by the *iyá* player during a *toque* to indicate the move to the next one. Sometimes the *vire* has an articulate and recognisable rhythmic figure, but often a slight advance or delay of a beat on the *iyá* is sufficient to indicate to the other two musicians that it is the moment to change.

In some cases the transition takes place directly. According to the configuration of the two *toques*, the *iyá* player may switch directly to the new rhythm and the other two players will be able to follow him.

The leader may also use a particular sound signal called an *agó*, which tells the other two musicians to stop and await the *llamada* for the next *toque*. The *agó* consists of two beats, one *abierto* and one *tapado*, on the larger skin of the *iyá*. It is essential that this short sequence is played ‘out of time’ with the *toque* the *tamboreros* are playing, so that it is easily identifiable. **Video 5.1**, recorded at various ceremonies in Havana between 2010 and 2011, shows the *llamada* for the first *toque* of the *orun seco*, called *Latopa*, followed by examples of various types of transition.

5.1 TRANSITIONS AMONG TOQUES

<https://youtu.be/U2uITNMckIs?si=J4A7X5gc2-HqEHYo>



Some *toques* include *conversaciones*, which are rhythmic exchanges between the *iyá* and the *itôtele* in the form of call and response. These *conversaciones* develop through conventional formulas proposed by the *iyá* player. At any moment, he can play the call to which the *itôtele* must respond. **Video 5.2** shows some of these *conversaciones* during an *orun seco* performed in Havana in October 2011. Those of the *toques* dedicated to the *orichas* Eleguá, Ogun and Obaloke in particular are shown.

5.2 CONVERSACIONES

<https://youtu.be/iJ5fod9CWis?si=rnJJ5vO6nThwnBS0>



In addition to leading the *conjunto*, the *iyá* player is free to improvise. In theory, a *toque* is an overlaying of the three drums’ rhythmic figures. In practice, the *okónkolo* and the *itôtele* must continuously repeat the base figure, while for the *iyá* this is only a reference from which to start playing increasingly complicated and articulate improvisations.

Video 5.3 presents the *toque Latopa* dedicated to the *oricha* Eleguá. Initially, the base pattern played by the three drums, together and separately, is illustrated. The second part analyses the improvisation of the *iyá* through a transcription system that allows the succession (and sometimes the repetition) of the different rhythmic formulas to be visualised. Finally, the same sequence is shown again at a speed reduced to 75%.

5.3 THE BATÁ DRUMS

<https://youtu.be/TKoJWxp7TXU>



Further readings

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Test your skills → in this part you can test what you have learned in the listening guide:

CUBAN SANTERÍA MUSIC

The following sets of quizzes present 10 multiple-choice questions each. The sets refer to the corresponding chapters:

1. INTRODUCTION

<https://forms.gle/PNwoPZVsk9WcakwV8>

> VAI AL QUIZ

2. THE BATÁ DRUMS

<https://forms.gle/h41ND5tdveJBXzrR9>

> VAI AL QUIZ

3. THE TOQUE DE SANTO RITUAL

<https://forms.gle/mF3QaQAigYvKMD8HA>

> VAI AL QUIZ

4.-5. ORUN SECO, ORUN CANTADO, AND LISTENING TO THE BATÁ DRUMS

<https://forms.gle/Dny7TSJRp4wMPeou7>

> VAI AL QUIZ

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS, COMPLETE THE SERIES BY SUBMITTING YOUR ANSWERS, AND YOU WILL RECEIVE FEEDBACK FOR EACH ANSWER!

The *Regla de Ocha* or *Santería* is the best known of the Afro-Cuban syncretic religions. The result of the encounter between the Catholicism of the Spanish conquistadors and the cults of the Yoruba slaves deported to the Caribbean island, it has tens of thousands of practitioners in Cuba and various other countries around the world. The pantheon of the *Santería* is populated by the *orichas*, to whom the faithful recognise characters common to Yoruba deities (Changó, Yemayá, etc.) and Catholic saints (St. Barbara, San Lazaro). In honour of the *orichas*, the faithful organise different types of ceremonies in which music is present. The most important is called *Toque de santo*, and involves the use of sacred *batá* drums, whose purpose is to call the *orichas* back to earth through rhythms that contribute to achieving altered states of consciousness.

Marco Lutz – Università degli Studi di Cagliari

marco.lutz@unica.it

Marco Lutz is Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of Cagliari. He has carried out fieldwork in Sardinia, Cuba, and Equatorial Guinea, focusing on the relationship between music and religion, improvised poetry, audiovisual ethnomusicology, performance analysis, and hip hop culture. He is the scientific director of the *Enciclopedia della Musica Sarda* (L'Unione Sarda, 2012) and Vice Chair of the ICTMD Study Group on Audiovisual Ethnomusicology. His recent publications include the documentary 'Santeros' (*Javem*, 2022) and the essay 'Crafting Fieldwork and Insider/Outsider Collaborations: Musical Ethnography in Sardinia' (co-authored with Kristina Jacobsen, *Ethnomusicology*, 2025).