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***FOLK INSTRUMENTS OF PUERTO RICO:
THEIR ORIGINS, ROOTS AND INFLUENCE IN
PUERTO RICAN CULTURE***

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Puerto Rican music in general is incomplete and inaccurate. There is little documentation available from the 16th through the 18th-century, due to the lack of attention that the Spanish authorities paid towards Puerto Rico. During this gestation time, educated people considered it not interesting to write about culture and music –especially *jíbaro* music– in Puerto Rico during the first centuries of the colonization time; it was more interesting to be a philosopher, for example.

It is possible the exposure of other European cultures (and thus their music and instruments) brought to Puerto Rico by contraband during this time, but there is no concrete evidence¹. The only true fact is that the music of the *jíbaros* is the basis of the Puerto Rican's shaping; to say *jíbaro* is the same as to say Puerto Rican. Thus, it was the *jíbaro* that first began to give shape to Puerto Rican culture, and with it the music and musical instruments.

This paper will explore the Puerto Rican instruments and how are they related to the history and culture of Puerto Rico.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Puerto Rican culture is part of a Hispanic civilization. It is the result of the *Spaniard's* encounter with the *Taíno Indian* and the *African*—with the Hispanic element remaining decisive and dominant. This creates an autonomous culture and music with national characteristics of its own and a variety of forms.

Various foods and many names of towns are of *Taíno* (Indian) origin in Puerto Rico. And so are some musical instruments, like the *maracas* and the *güiros*. Drums from hollow tree trunks with a thin skin are Indian, too. The rhythms themselves are Spanish or African.

During colonization times in Puerto Rico (around 1508) began the Golden Age of the *vihuela de mano* in the courts of Spain; it had 6 courses. There was also the *vihuela del pueblo* with four courses, the *vihuela de plectro*

¹ Orlando Laureano mentions the existence of people from Ireland settled in Puerto Rico before 1812 in his article *El Cuatro Puertorriqueño, Breve Historia*, available from <http://www.teoria.com/articles/laureano/index.htm> (Internet; accessed 15 November 2001).

and the *vihuela de arco*. The documents of the Real Hacienda in Puerto Rico tell us that the first *vihuela* entered Puerto Rico in 1512, and in 1516 entered the first *Spanish guitar*.²

The Spanish tradition makes itself strongly felt in the melodies of Puerto Rican folk music. The melodies are carried usually by the Spanish guitar or by the Puerto Rican's own string instruments: the *cuatro*, *tiple*, *tres* and *bordonúa*.³

During the 19th century, Puerto Rican musical tradition had been developing, as the Spanish heritage was slowly assimilated into Afro-Caribbean folk music.

In 1898, during the Spanish American War, American troops invaded Puerto Rico and raised the American flag. To many Puerto Ricans, it was apparent that the almost 400 years of cultural exchange with Spain had come to an end. According to some musicians and writers, the arrival of Americans announced the beginning of a period of decline. Curiously, after Spain ceded sovereignty over Puerto Rico to the United States, Puerto Rico retained its Hispanic character and culture. Evidence shows that the musical culture did not decline. Musical activities continued on the island throughout the first decade of the era.

MUSICAL GENRES

There is no doubt of the importance and transcendence of the *orquesta jíbara* (folk ensemble), which began to take its shape in the 16th-century among all social classes. The *jíbaro music* was used before for almost every occasion, including festivities, funerals, religious occasions, and especially in Christmas season. Its topics involve in one way or another national affirmation, patriotism. Some examples of *jíbaro* genres are the *seis*, which is the dorsal spine of the music in Puerto Rico; the Spanish *villancico* and the *aguinaldo* are other forms used for Puerto Rican Christmas songs. These are sung by *trovadores*. The *trovadores* make use of the improvisation. This difficult art is one of the remarkable features of Puerto Rican folk music, used in the *décima*. The *décima*, a song of ten-line verses in rhymed octosyllabics descending from medieval Spanish ballads, and the *aguinaldo* are often extemporized. The *trovador* sings of love, of man's conditions and experiences, of his people, his country, of persons he wants to honor and of events that impress him.

The direct African influence on the folk music of Puerto Rico and on Puerto Rican folklore in general has been the consequence of the importation of African slaves by the Spaniards. Traditionally the African influence in

² See the *Musical Instruments* section later in this paper for more information about the *vihuela* and the *Spanish guitar*.

³ See the *Musical Instruments* section later in this paper for more information about the *cuatro*, *tiple*, *tres* and *bordonúa*.

Puerto Rican music has been strongest near the coasts where the percentage of people of African descent is much higher. The Afro-Puerto Rican people brought the joyfulness of the dance even into events of religious solemnity, like the *baquiné* (a funeral dance for a black boy who has died), the *chanted rosaries* and the *fiestas de Cruz* (celebration of the Holy Cross).

The *bomba* is an Afro-Puerto Rican dance (and song). People used it to express themselves. The *bomba* dance of the Black sugar-cane cutters and other plantation workers was named after a wooden drum covered with goatskin, the *bomba* or *bombo*. It was a monotonous and sensuous dance for festivities at the end of the harvest. The accompaniment was provided by percussion instruments: *the bomba drum* (different sizes), *palillos* (wooden sticks), and *maracas*⁴. There are two types of *bomba drums*: one is the *buleador*, which makes the basic rhythm; the other, the *primo*, makes the improvisation. The *primo* has a unique responsibility: to do exactly what the dancer does with his/her dancing, at the same time he/she is doing it; it is a kind of challenge, a communication between the dancer and the drum player. There is no limit on the number of *buleadores* to be playing, but there can be only one primo.

The *plena* is the most famous Afro-Puerto Rican musical form. It has Taíno antecedents and is proletarian. The instruments originally used in the *plena* dance are usually *panderos* (kind of hand-drums), *güiro* and *maracas*. There are three kinds of *pandero* used in the *plena* dance, depending on their size, sound and function in the music. The first is the *seguidor*, which makes the principal basic rhythm. The second, the *punteador*, makes a counter-rhythm to the *seguidor*. And the last one, the *requinto*, improvises, with syncopated rhythm, as an answer or complement to the *seguidor* rhythm. There should not be confusion between the *plena* name for the musical genre and the *panderos*; the *panderos* are not plenas. In addition to these instruments, as the *plena* evolves they have added the Spanish guitar, the Puerto Rican *cuatro*, and even the clarinet and the accordion; this last one brought by foreign sailors when they stopped at the ports and join the musicians in Puerto Rico.

The Puerto Rican *danza* was officially the first national musical genre, because it is shared by all social sectors. The *danza* has a European character and originated with the 19th-century upper class. It was a society dance; and it became music for bands, for the piano and for singing. It has become very much a part of Puerto Rico's musical folklore; but it also was to develop into concert music. Into it were incorporated the *cuatro* and the *güiro* by one of the best exponent of the *danza*, Juan Morel Campos.

The *danza* can have different rhythms and moods. Romantic or affective *danzas* usually have soft rhythm and cadences. Festive *danzas* (often referred as *danzas de carnaval*) have more syncopated and accelerated rhythms;

There are also the *danzas* which use the *bombardino* as a soloist instrument, like *Sara* (Angel Mislán), *La Coquetona* (José E. Quintón) and *Impromptu* (Luis R. Miranda).

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

“The musical instruments are not the only neutral roots, but solid deposits of the historical continuity; and, similarly to tools and buildings, they have memories and history. They carry inside bites of social and conceptual changes through which they were developed and transformed.” (Luciano Berio)

Puerto Rican traditional musical instruments include basically the plucked string and percussion families. One interesting datum in the mention among Puerto Rican instruments of the *marímbula*, an Antillean modification of the African *lamellophone*⁵, that serves as a basis instrument during many popular festivities involving music. There is no evidence of this instrument being used currently, but it deserves to be mentioned since it is registered in history.

As in the culture itself, the Puerto Rican musical instruments share the heritage from all their three roots: Taíno, African and Spanish.

TAÍNO HERITAGE

The *Taíno* Indians sang with their dances a monotonous chant (monody), the *areyto*, accompanied by a *maguey*, by the *maracas* and the *güiro* (which in the country is also called *carracho*). The voice range was short and monotonous, and their chants were nasal. They had a constantly repeated rhythmic figure. It is presumed that their modes were similar to the old ecclesiastic modes of the European church in the Middle Ages. They had the response characteristic of a leader (or small group) singing something and then the other remaining people repeat the same or answer to it, doing the chorus function.

⁴ See the *Musical Instruments* section later in this paper for more information about the *bomba drum*, *palillos* and *maracas*.

Their instruments belong to the woodwind and percussion family:

Woodwinds:

Guamos or trompas de caracol (fotuto)

Flautines de junco o hueso (silbato) and ocarinas de barro

Pitos, chirimías and reed flutes

Percussion:

Maguey or mayohuacán drums (made of wood)

Amaraca (known today as maraca)

Guajeyes (the güiro belongs to this family); scraped with a púa (metal piece)

Sonajeros pequeños (caracoles), attached to their wrists and feet to shake them while they were dancing

The *Taíno* instruments were used for dances, magic enchantments, battles, and for weather, parties and victory announcements. From all of these, the *maraca* and the *güiro* are the only ones which still survives in Puerto Rican culture today.

The *AMARACA* is originally made of dried round gourds from the fruit of the *higüera* tree, with pebbles or dried seeds inside. Its deaf sound served to mark the beats in music. They used only one *amaraca*. The costume today is to use two; this is probably an influence of the African culture. They used two kinds of *amaracas*, one for religious rituals and the other for other kinds of activities; though they did not have any social activities, but all rituals. Today the *amaraca* is known as *maraca*.

The name *maraca* is thought to be Pre-Columbian Araucanian origin. They form an integral part of the rhythm section of Latin American orchestras and are widespread particularly in Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil. They

⁵ A musical instrument whose sound is generated essentially by the vibration of thin *lamellae* (thin plate or layer) or tongues of metal, wood or other material. It is found throughout many regions of sub-Saharan Africa and in Latin America.

have been adopted by Western rhythm bands and percussion ensembles and are also important instruments in primary school education. Modern composers to score for *maracas* include Varèse (*Ionisation*, 1934), Prokofiev (*Romeo and Juliet*, 1935) and Malcolm Arnold (*Fourth Symphony*, 1960). Occasionally *maracas* are used as ‘drumsticks’. Bernstein’s *Jeremiah Symphony* (1942), Harold Farbermann’s *Concerto for Timpani and Orchestra* (1962) and Marius Constant’s ballet *Paradis perdu* (1967) request this effect.

The *GÜIRO* is an elongated gourd made from the fruit of the *guajey* tree, with a notched surface to be scraped with a piece of metal. It is used in the Caribbean, Panamá and South America. It gives rhythmic emphasis to the music. In Puerto Rico, the *güiro* is used in most types of folk and popular music, and in certain religious festivals. The modern *güiro* has been used in orchestral scores, including Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* and Ravel’s *L’enfant et les sortilèges*; in this last one may be in place of the specified scraped cheese-grater.

The *maguey*, their wooden drum, differently to the African drums, did not use goatskin. The *Taino* made it by cutting a tree of the same thickness as him, and shortening it with axe and stone. By hitting its surface with a 12 inches stick produced its deaf sound.

AFRICAN HERITAGE

To talk about African music means to talk about drums or instruments made of goatskin, which is the biggest African heritage to Puerto Rican culture, along with rhythm. There are different drums sizes: the *tamborcillos*, the *gran timba* or *conga*, the *bongó*, the *sonajeros* made of coconut nuts (similar to the *Taíno*’s ones) and the tambourine. The *clave*, as well as the *cencerro*, comes from the *bantú* culture.

The Negro tradition survives in the *bomba dances* that came mainly from the Ghana coasts, and originated in Puerto Rico in the sugar cane central. The instrumental ensemble is made by two or more drums (called *bombas*), two *palillos* (wooden sticks) and one *maraca*. The *BOMBA DRUM* is an Afro-Ecuadorian double-headed drum, found in Chota and Intag, Imbabura Province, and in Río Limones, Esmeraldas Province. The drum has barrel shape and the goatskin is heated to create tension and change the pitch. The biggest of the drums has the deepest sound and is called *burlador* or *buleador*, and has the basic rhythm. The smallest of the drums is the *requinto*, *subidor* or *primo*, which has a high timbre and supplement the rhythm of the *buleador*. It is also the one who “dialogues” and makes a challenge with the dancer. Another musician hits the sides of the barrel drum with sticks called *cúa* or *púa*, to keep the exact measure of the beat in the music. The *maraca* is played by one of the singers in the choir, usually a woman. A unison choir, directed by a leading voice (usually

a woman), sings the main melody. The musical elements present in the *bomba dance* are the rhythm (the most important one) and the melody (chant) between the leading voice and the unison choir.

The main instruments in the *plena dance* were the *PANDEROS* and the *güiro*. Little by little another instruments were added, like the accordion, the Spanish guitar, the *cuatro* and the *cencerro*.

The *CONGA* is an Afro-Cuban drum. It has a long, tapered or barrel-shaped shell up to about 90 cm deep and a single head about 25 to 30 cm in diameter. *Congas* are usually played with fingers and hollow palm of the hand. They have become integral to Latin American dance orchestras, where they are used in pairs or singly, having a screw-tensioned heads; in such cases the hoop is well below the rim of the shell (as with the bongos) to allow free action of the fingers, etc. Applying pressure to the head (from edge to center) can raise the pitch with the hand, wrist or elbow.

The *PALILLOS* (other names include *palitos* or *claves*) are simple wooden sticks used to mark the certain rhythms in the music.

The Bombardino

The alternatively name for the *bombardino* is *flicorno baritono*. It is a valve bugle horn of widely conical profile; the Italian equivalent to the Austrian *flugelhorn*, the Spanish *fiscorn* and the French *saxhorn*. The *bombardino* is the equivalent of the euphonium with three or four valves, with configuration in C or Bb, compass *E-d'*. This instrument, though not a Puerto Rican folk instrument, played an important part during the 20th-century virtuoso solos in many Puerto Rican *danzas*.

PLUCKED STRING INSTRUMENTS (“SPANISH HERITAGE”)

The *triple*, the *cuatro* and the *bordonúa*, all together with the guitar and other percussion instruments (like the *güiro* and the *maraca*) make the main spine of the musical culture of Puerto Rico⁶. From these, the *cuatro* is the most important and re-known of all (it will be discussed more in detail later in this section).

The *BORDONÚA* is a plucked string instrument derived from the guitar, with five courses of strings tuned *A-d-f#-b-e'*. It took its name from the *bordón* (thick string). Due to the absence of information makes it impossible

⁶ Mentioned for the first time (except the guitar) as the components of the *orquesta jíbara* (folk ensemble) in 1849 by Manuel A. Alonso in his book *El Gíbaro* (Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Cultural, 1974), 39.

to trace the origin and development of this instrument. Probably its model was the *guitarrón* or giant lute, used in the 18th-century string ensembles and having the same role as the *bordonúa*. The Puerto Rican *costumbrista* literature of the 19th century makes a lot of references to the *bordonúa*, mentioned together with other native plucked string instruments⁷. The *bordonúa* is the less known instrument in Puerto Rico, though it is not the less important one.

The *bordonúa* is the low voice in the *orquesta jíbara*. A peculiar characteristic of it is a tremolo/vibrato the player does to the string, which gives the feeling that the string “is crying”. It was replaced in the beginning of the 20th-century by the Spanish guitar; since that, it began to disappear. Thank to the effort of some people in the second half of the century, especially Francisco López Cruz, it was rescued. He created an orchestra of *bordonúas*, and its sound began to be heard again.

The *TIPLE* is told to be a descendant from the *guitarillo* of the Canario Islands of the 17th-century. The word *tiple* itself came from the Spanish language, which means, “treble” or “soprano”, often applied to specific instruments. This instrument also exists in Spain, Colombia, Guatemala and Venezuela. In Puerto Rico there are three kinds of *tiple*: the *tiple doliente*, the *tiple requinto*, and the *tiplón* or *tiple con macho*. The *tiple doliente* has 16 frets, 5 strings and is tuned in C. It is the most common in the mountains. In the coast area the most common are the *requinto*, with 10 frets and 3 strings, tuned in B; and the *tiple con macho* or *tiplón*, with 18 frets and 5 strings, tuned in E. Its fifth string is attached to a peg on the neck, similarly to the North-American banjo. Since the banjo has African origins, is it thought that this kind of *tiple* does too, especially because the wood used to make both instruments is the same African people use.

The *TRES* is a type of small guitar with three singles or double courses of strings. They are more common in Cuba. In Puerto Rico it has three singles strings, tuned *b-g'-d*”. It is primarily a melodic instrument, and not as common as the *tiple*.

The *CUATRO* is the main instrument of Puerto Rico. Its sounds represent today the national identity of Puerto Rico; it is the voice of the *jíbaro* in the mountain and in the coast. Besides Puerto Rico, it is also found in South America and the West Indies, specifically Colombia, Jamaica, Mexico, Sundam and Trinidad. In Puerto Rico and Venezuela the *cuatro* is used as an ensemble instrument for both secular and religious music. It is made of native woods and exists in a wide variety of shapes, retaining plectrum technique of the Spanish *vihuela de*

⁷ Manuel A. Alonso (1849-82), in his book *El Gíbaro*, describes the *bordonúa* as “a guitar of big dimensions, made most of the times with the only-available-to-the-moment tools, like a knife or a dagger”.

peñola. The *cuatro* is associated with the Puerto Rican *jíbaro*; his music has the same meaning than memories and history.

There are several theories of the origin of the *cuatro*, but none of them have complete documentation. Those are:

1. The **vihuela**. It was the first instrument to enter Puerto Rico, but there is no prove for it to be a predecessor of the instrument as well. The *biguela* is mentioned twice in Alonso and Atilés writings, but there are not even tuning descriptions to compare with. It is the most convincing of all the theories by now. It is curious that the word *vihuela* remains in the *jíbaro*'s vocabulary when they refer to the string instruments (including the *cuatro*).
2. The **bandurria** is a possibility stated by the *Cuatro Project* in New York, due to the Spanish closeness of the rondallas and fourths tuning, like the *cuatro*.
3. The **tiple (doliente or requinto)** is thought to be already present before the *cuatro*. The *cuatro* could be a modification of this instrument that continued growing up since then (this can be possible, based on the writings of Juan M. Delgado)⁸.

It is also mentioned the Portuguese *cavaquihno* as its 15th-century predecessor which, like the *cuatro*, had four strings. But again, there is no documentation to support it.

Originally, as the name itself, the *cuatro* had four single strings, tuned in 4ths. Between 1849 and 1887 the strings were doubled and it was added an additional double string⁹. By the beginning of the 20th-century the *cuatro* had already five double courses of strings. One of the reasons for these changes was the looking for a greater volume of sound. The first five double-course *cuatro* registered in history can be seen in a picture of *Joaquín Rivera "El Surdo"*, a great left-handed Puerto Rican *cuatro* player.

⁸ In a writing by the Puerto Rican artisan from the Cabo Rojo town, Efraín Pérez, he presents the *cuatro* made in his town in the beginning of 20th-century as the *cuatro doliente*. Still is needed to see the transition in shapes of the old *cuatros* and its variations.

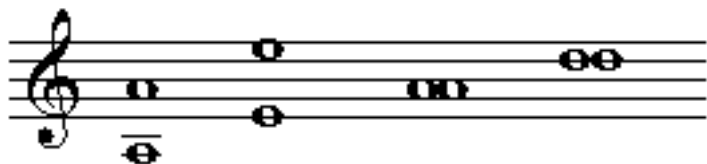
⁹ The theories about which string was added (either the highest or the lowest one) are different. However, valuable evidence is found in the *cuatro* method by Efraín Ronda (*La Antorcha*, 1933-34), where there is a hint about the tuning for the old *cuatro*. As shown in the following examples A and B, the string added during the transition of the courses was the highest one, that is, the G string, while the B string was originally tuned in A.

Between the 16th-century and the end of 18th-century the Puerto Rican people had no direct contact with European luthiers. The *jíbaros* did not have good-quality materials available to make the instruments; so they made them with whatever they had available at that time. Usually the closest people to these skills were cabinetmakers, carpenters and handwork makers, so the technique of doubling the wood was not known at that time¹⁰. In the 19th-century, however, there is a generation of good-quality, four double-course *cuatros* made by good artisans, which were played by great *cuatro* players from that time. By 1910, the *cuatro* had officially its new or modern shape, as a result of better artisans and more accessible materials to work with.

In the 1970's, the artisan Cristóbal Santiago continued the project that Antonio Rodríguez Navarro began before: to create a whole family of *cuatros* of different ranges. The *cuatro soprano* substitutes the *tiple*; the *cuatro tenor* is the most-known one; the *cuatro alto* is a new invention; and the *cuatro bajo* substitutes the *bordonúa*.

The *cuatro* becomes officially a Puerto Rican national instrument in the middle of 19th-century.

Example A: Tuning of the old *cuatro* (four double courses)



Example B: Tuning of the new *cuatro* (five double courses)



¹⁰ The Puerto Rican historian and luthier, Prof. Rafael Avilés Vázquez, tells us in one of his writings about the first *cuatros*: "*These cuatros, which we called archaic, were forgotten because the materials used to build them were of weak resistance to the time action. The old cuatro was very rustic, and its acoustic box was more similar to the African lute-harp rather than the European instruments. Its tuning was inaccurate, just like the African lute-harp. Its rough ending shows the poor skills of the tools used in the handwork*".

THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH FOLK/POPULAR MUSIC AND ART MUSIC AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN PUERTO RICAN CULTURE

Around 1850 there were theater, opera and zarzuela companies, military bands and orchestras in Puerto Rico traveling around the cities and enriching the Puerto Rican. The *jíbaros* that traveled from town to town were the only ones to listen to this, because it never got into the rural area. Thus, they began to imitate and perform rhythms and pieces in their *cuatros* like the waltz, the mazurka, the polka and the *paso doble*, among others.

The *cuatro* made his official entrance to the world of popular music in 1915 with the *Borinquen Quintet* in New York, and in Puerto Rico itself in 1924 with the ensemble *Bohemios Puertorriqueños*. After that it was used in the *trios* music in the 1950s, highly influenced by *Los Panchos* trio.

The arriving of the radio broadcasting to Puerto Rico in the beginning of the 20th-century affects the entire island. After established, around 1930-40, the *cuatro* was popularized through a radio broadcasting program called *Industrias Nativas*, in which played one of the most famous and greatest cuatro player, Ladislao Martínez (better known as maestro Ladí). He was the one responsible for the creation of a wide repertoire for the *cuatro* with his ensemble *Aurora*, where the music is perform with two *cuatros*, Spanish guitar and *güiro*. His repertoire included mazurkas, polkas, waltzes, *paso dobles*, fox-trot, *guarachas* and *boleros*, among others. He is the first one to perform the *cuatro* when the radio broadcasting station WKAQ AM began in the old San Juan in the 1920 decade. This way he reached to all the people from the mountains without having to go there and providing a performable repertoire, in comparison to the orchestral repertoire that was not easy to learn for the *cuatro* players that listened to the radio. These *cuatro* players then listened to him by the radio and imitated him. Maestro Ladí worked on the project of *Industrias Nativas* together with the composer Felipe R. Goyco (Don Felo) and the *güiro* player Patricio Rijos (bette known as Toribio). They marked an unforgettable time for all the Puerto Ricans.

The 1970's are characterized by the creation of the Nueva Canción (New Song), where youth people are seen using the *cuatro*. In the 1980's the *cuatro* made its entrance to the art music. Each day there are more and more transcriptions of works by Bach and other composers for the *cuatro*. Ernesto Cordero, a prominent 20th-century Puerto Rican composer, wrote a Concerto for Puerto Rican *Cuatro* and String Orchestra (1988). The Rondalla of Humacao (a folk ensemble) applied the techniques of the Suzuki method to the *cuatro* teaching.

The first method to learn how to play the *cuatro* (*La antorcha*) was created and published by Efraín Ronda between 1933 and 1934. In the late 1950's the Dr. Ricardo Alegría, director of the Institute of Culture of Puerto Rico (created in 1955), support the creation of *cuatro* hand-making concourse. Then in 1960's he contacted Francisco López Cruz, who was in Spain, and asks him to work with the creation of a *cuatro* method targeting the teaching in mass, due to the danger of its virtual disappearance. This was the boost that gives again life to the Puerto Rican *cuatro* and brought it to the place it has today among Puerto Rican people as a representative of the national identity in the string category. Rafael "Pilo" Suárez also published a *cuatro* learning method after 1970.

In the 1990's the University of Puerto Rico (Rio Piedras campus) created an institutional ensemble called *Conjunto Criollo*, dedicated to folk music (using folk instruments), as a suggestion of Dr. Luis Manuel Álvarez. In 1997 the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico began to offer a Puerto Rican *cuatro* course, limited to two years but aiming to create a whole degree in the instrument and its actual repertoire. Also, the Inter American University of Puerto Rico (metro campus) has included the Puerto Rican *cuatro* in its popular music program.

Similarly to the Institute of Culture of Puerto Rico, the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño* was founded in 1876, and it promoted the arts by encouraging the development of literary forms, musical compositions, musical performance, and the other fine arts. They together make efforts today to keep alive the musical genres and musical instruments in Puerto Rico.

CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing what we have exploring through this paper, we have the fact that Puerto Rican culture is a very rich culture with a very complex history, that I have to confess not every Puerto Rican knows. These musical instruments, as well as the musical genres are the ones who determine the identity of the Puerto Rican. As long as each Puerto Rican (and this applies also to every person of every nation) knows his/her roots, then he/she can grow as a person, as a human, and blossom like a tree, like a flower, because he/she has strong fundamentals.

Based on this information given here, we can conclude that there is plenty of work remaining to do in the Puerto Rican culture, more specifically in music. As a Puerto Rican –and a musician– I feel responsibility and commitment with my country to be part of the team that helps to investigate, collect information, and put together all so other people from other countries can know more about Puerto Rican instruments and music in general. I think even when researchers have done pretty good job there is still a long way to work on. I just hope every Puerto Rican musician feels the same way as me...

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