

# ELEGGUA

WHO IS HE?  
WHAT MUSIC IS PLAYED TO HONOUR HIM?

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2008

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## Table of contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
TABLES	4
FIGURES	5
INTRODUCTION	6
1 SHORT HISTORY OF SANTERIA	8
1.1 WHERE DOES THE RELIGION HAVE ITS ORIGINS?	8
1.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF SANTERIA IN CUBA	10
1.3 THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE YORUBA RELIGION INTO SANTERIA	11
2 THE ORISHAS	12
2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ORISHAS	12
2.2 OVERVIEW OF MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	13
2.3 RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ORISHAS	17
3 THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF A CEREMONY	19
3.1 ORU SECO	19
3.2 ORU CANTADO	20
3.3 IBAN BALO	21
3.4 CIERRE	21
4 THE BATA DRUMS	23
4.1 THEIR ORIGIN	23
4.2 THEIR NAMES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE MUSIC	23
4.3 CONSTRUCTION	25
4.3.1 GENERAL APPEARANCE	25
4.3.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO DIFFERENT SETS OF BATA DRUMS	26
4.4 THEIR LANGUAGE	27

5 ELEGGUA	29
5.1 SHORT RESUME OF HIS MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	29
5.2 ORIGIN	30
5.3 PARENTAGE	30
5.4 MYTHS	31
5.5 APPEARANCE	32
5.6 HIS ROLE	32
5.7 CAMINOS	33
5.8 ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA	33
5.9 LEGBA	33
5.9.1 INTRODUCTION TO VODOU	34
5.9.2 THE VODOU CEREMONY	35
5.9.3 MUSICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VODOU AND SANTERIA	36
5.9.4 ASPECTS OF LEGBA	37
6 TOQUES Y CANTOS	39
6.1 TOQUES (RHYTHMS)	39
6.2 CANTOS (SONGS)	40
6.3 ANALYSES OF THE MAJOR TOQUES	42
6.3.1 LA TOPA	42
6.3.2 LA LUBANCHE	48
6.3.3 ÑONGO	50
6.3.4 CHACHALOKAFU	51
6.3.5 TEREMINA	52
6.3.6 SALIDA	53
6.4 CANTOS	55
CONCLUSION	79
GLOSSARY	82
BIBLIOGRAPHY	86

## Tables

Table 1: Overview of the Orishas	13
Table 2: Characteristics of Elegua	29

## Figures

Figure 1: Map of Yorubaland	9
Figure 2: Chango and Yemaya	16
Figure 3: Family Tree	17
Figure 4: the Bata Drums	26
Figure 5: Elegua	30
Figure 6: Sign for Legba	33

## Introduction

Since I have participated in my first Bata drum workshop with Jérôme Goldschmidt some years ago, the Cuban religious music of Santeria fascinated me. After this first contact with the Bata drums I continued to take more and more classes, and tried to play as much as I could, which led me finally to dedicate my thesis to this subject.

Because there is little literature about this topic, I decided to go to New York, to make research, and to get to listen to Bata drumming. I got in touch with really fascinating people, who inspired me a lot. But again I learned one more time, that many people don't want to share their knowledge of this mystic music.

The music is played in a religious context, and so many people think that you should be initiated into Santeria in order to learn the drumming, which is understandable in one way. One more problem I encountered was, that in Santeria women are not allowed to play the Bata drums. Because of this fact some people in New York were also not willing to teach me.

But nevertheless I found musicians like John Amira, who shared his enormous knowledge with me, and Pedrito Martinez, who really inspired me a lot with his playing and his open mind.

I had to put my focus on one topic. What I decided to do is putting my accent on one God only: ELEGGUA.

But how can I talk about Elegua without explaining the main aspects of Santeria?

In my work you will find background information on the Cuban religion and its Gods and on the drums used in religious ceremonies, called Bata drums.

The last, and biggest chapter of my thesis is dedicated to Eleggua, the first Orisha in the Yoruban Pantheon. I made research on the main characteristics of Eleggua, and also made a link to Legba, the corresponding God in the Vodou tradition of Haiti. I did not only compare the Gods, but also the music of both religions, which have some parts in common, but also know a lot of differences.

This work will not teach you how to play the Bata drums, and will also not reveal all the secrets of Santeria. In my thesis I will give an overview over what this religion and music is all about, and over the main percussive grooves, and songs played for Eleggua.

What is Santeria? How can drums talk? And who is Eleggua?

These are some of the questions I am going to find an answer in this work.

## 1 Short history of Santeria

In the chapter below you will find information about how and where *Santeria* developed. As my thesis will not be a theological research, I concentrated on the musical side of *Santeria*. To explain how this religion works would go behind the scope of this work.

### 1.1 Where does the religion have its origins?

The origins of SANTERIA, or REGLA DE OCHA, lie in West Africa. The worship of *Orishas* (see Glossary) came to Cuba during slavery time (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century). The region where these slaves came from was known as YORUBALAND, today's southwestern Nigeria and a part of Benin. Murphy (1988:23) mentions that one estimates that the number of slaves brought to Cuba lies between 527'828 and 702'000.

It is wrong to say that Yorubaland was one big nation. In fact, there lived more than twenty different ethnic groups with their own kingdoms as for example the EGBA, LAGOS, KETU OR IFE (Volkenandt, 5.1).

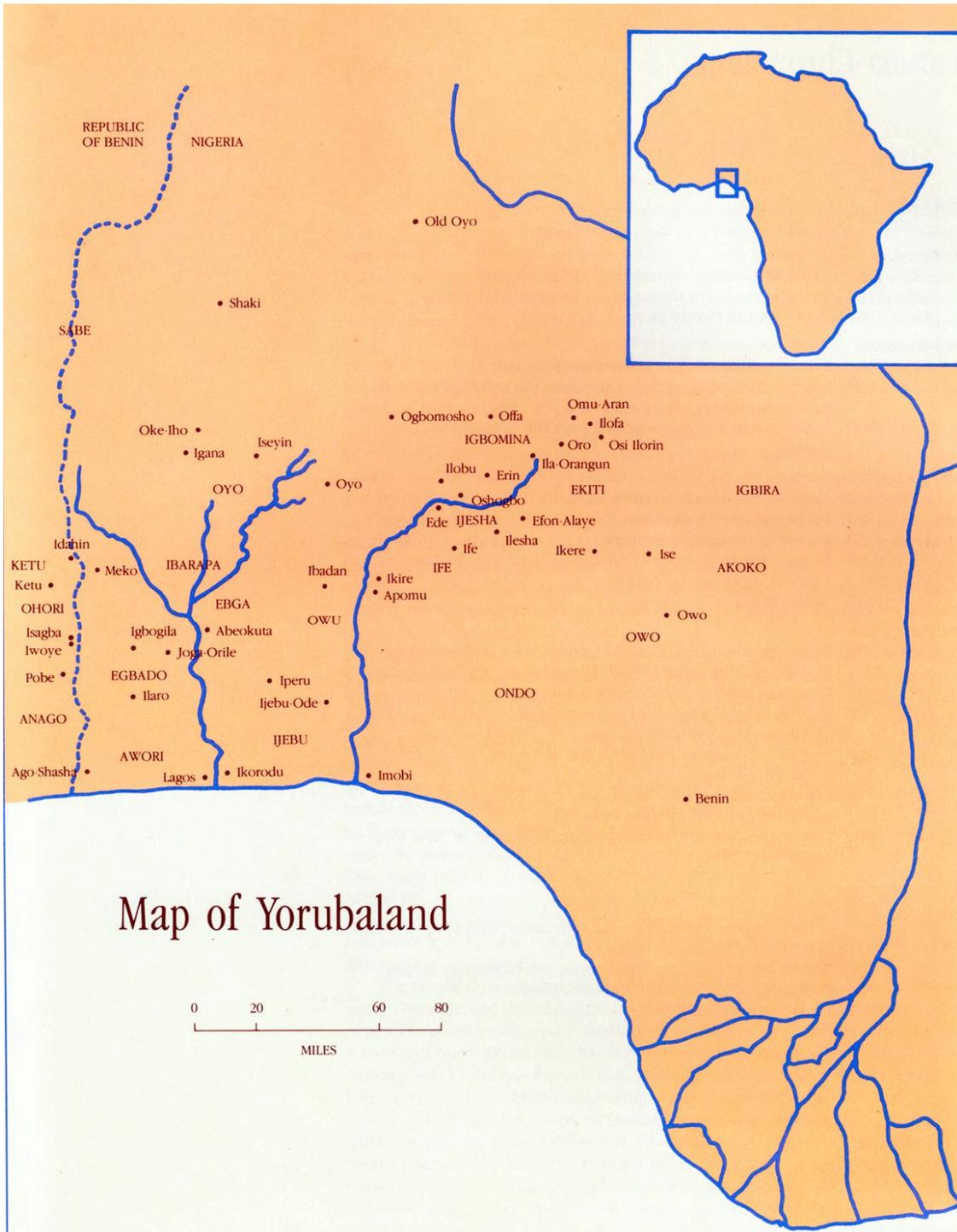
The two most important cities were OYO, which was the political capital of the kingdoms, and IFE, the religious centre.

*Several versions of the Yoruba myth of origin exist, of which the most popular revolve around a figure named Oduduwa. As recorded by one of the earliest Yoruba historians, Reverend Samuel Johnson, Oduduwa was the head of an invading army from the East (a place often identified with Mecca, the Sudan, or northeastern Nigeria) who established the constitutional monarchic system of government amongst the indigenous population he found.*

*Other versions of the myth posit that Oduduwa was sent down by Olodumare, the Creator, to fashion the first human beings out of the clay soil of Ile-Ife.*

*(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yorubaland>)*

Figure 1: Map of Yorubaland



My focus lies in the history of *Yoruba* in Cuba. For those who are more interested in the history of Yorubaland, I can recommend you an article on <http://www.yorubanation.org/Yoruba.htm>.

## 1.2 The development of Santeria in Cuba

The sugar mill owners needed a huge number of labours to work on the plantations. Because of this, they started to bring an enormous number of African slaves to Cuba. Slavery trade began in Cuba already around 1515 but found its highest point in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even if the Englishmen prohibited slavery trade in 1820. In Cuba, it took until 1886 for slavery to finally be abolished.

A group of slaves working and living together on the plantations never consisted of slaves from one single ethnic group. Slaves originating from the Bakongo region, the kingdom of Dahomey, Angola and from Yorubaland were mixed. The different cultures and languages were meant to keep them apart. But nevertheless it was impossible to separate them completely, and that is how slaves started to reconstruct their ancestral cultures and religions, in which dance and music played an important role. This reconstruction happened in their plantation barracks (Rodriguez, 1995:2-3).

Another important role in the development of *Santeria* were the CABILDOS.

In first place, the role of these societies, which were allowed by the Spanish rulers and supervised by the Church, was to provide mutual aid and religious instruction, but also to meet slaves from the same ethnic group, like for example the LUKUMI. In Cuba *Lukumi* was the name given to all slaves coming from Yorubaland. It is derived from the way of greeting each other, saying OLUKU MI, which means “my friend” (Murphy, 1988:27). The *Cabildos* were under protection of the Catholic Church because the Spanish thought that this would maybe help to Christianize the slaves.

The Catholic feasts gave the slaves the opportunity to put their style of celebration into the public festivities. They played their music and danced the

way they were used back in Yorubaland. The most Africanized religious festivity was the day of Epiphany, or *dia de reyes*. It became their special day because of the black king Melchior coming from Africa to adore Jesus on his birth. They saw the African presence in the Catholic religion and this made this feast day the most important for the *Lukumi* (Murphy, 1988:30).

### **1.3 The transformation of the Yoruba religion into Santeria**

In Cuba syncretism happened. This means that elements of different religions are fused to a new religion in which you can still see the origins of the different elements. At the beginning, slaves had to hide their *Orishas* behind the picture of a Catholic Saint because they were supposed to be Catholics. Moreover they could only worship them on a catholic feast day. But soon they realized the similarities between their *Orishas* and the Saints, and so both religions were mixed and *Santeria*, or *Regla de Ocha* was born. In some cases this fusion was very superficial, and so it happened that some male *Orishas* have a female Saint as counterpart. This is the case for *Chango*, who became Santa Barbara. But *Lukumi* don't see this as a problem, because of the fact that every *Orisha* has female as well as male attributes. They consider Santa Barbara as one aspect of *Chango*. Important for the choice to link both of them together was the red dress of Santa Barbara, and the fact that both are connected to thunder (Volkenandt, 5.3).

## 2 The Orishas

What is an *Orisha*? What is his role, and what are his main characteristics?

I made a research about the familial relations between the different *Orishas*, and put them together in a family tree.

### 2.1 General information about Orishas

*Yoruba believe that nature, or God, is the Supreme Being, called OLUDUMARE (Edwards & Mason, 1985:1).*

*Oludumare* had no time to involve himself in the affairs of men and that's why he divided his power amongst his messengers, called ORISHAS. They are considered deities in the Yoruba pantheon. They are superior to men but inferior to God. Yoruba people use them as messengers and pray to them instead of directly to *Oludumare*.

The *Orishas* are parts of God, and every one of them rules upon one part of the Universe (Edwards & Mason, 1985:1). They personify the different forces of nature, like for example the wind, the ocean or thunder.

An *Orisha* is not considered to be perfect. He has human characteristics, which are both, good and bad. These aspects are called CAMINOS, meaning roads.

As already mentioned in the chapter about *Santeria*, each *Orisha* is linked to a Catholic Saint. This is due to the fact that during slavery time the Spaniards wanted to Christianize the slaves. Those hid their *Orishas* behind the faces of the Catholic Saints and kept on praying to them.

Furthermore every *Orisha* has his own rhythms, his specific objects, and favourite food and drinks as well as a special day, number and colour.

There is a huge number of *Orishas* in Yorubaland. It is often said that there are 401 of them in Yorubaland, which is a mystic number symbolizing a multitude (de la Torre, 2004:45). In Cuba however, there are only around twenty-four *Orishas* left (Sobisch, 2004:187).

The *Orishas* can be divided into different groups:  
 (Altmann, 2004:9-10)

- TRES GUERREROS, three warriors: Elegua, Ogun and Ochosi
- ORISHAS DE FUNDAMENTO, fundamentals: Elegua, Obatala, Chango, Yemaya and Ochun
- SIETE POTENCIAS, seven powers: Elegua, Ogun, Obatala, Chango, Yemaya, Ochun and Oya
- ORISHAS FUNFUN, the white Orishas: Obatala, Oddudua, Ochosi, Ochun, Oricha Oko

## 2.2 Overview of main characteristics

In this section I put some of the characteristics of the *Orishas* in one table. Unfortunately there are some aspects missing. I could nowhere find information on those attributes.

**Table 1: Overview of the Orishas**

ORISHA	FIELD OF POWER	CORRESPONDENT CATHOLIC SAINT & LINK	COLORS	
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ELEGGUA	Orisha of the crossroads	St. Anthony He carries a child	Red & black
OGUN	Orisha of metal and the war	St. Peter He holds a key of metal	Black & light green
OCHOSI	Hunter	St. Norbert He is a passionate	Blue & yellow

		hunter	
OBALOKE	Orisha of the mountains	St. Robert	Unclear
INLE	Fisherman	St. Rafael He has the ability to heal	Green & white, green & yellow
BABALU AYE	Orisha of illness	St. Lazarus He is a poor beggar who is starving	Brown & black
OSAIN	Orisha of plants and herbs	St. Sylvester	Lavender & black Green & black
OSUN	Unclear	John the Baptist He revealed like Osun a secret of a sexual relationship	White, blue, yellow and red
OBATALA	Orisha of peace and justice	Lady of Mercy She is like Obatala a very important Saint	White
DADA	Orisha of the gardens	Lady of the Rosary	Unclear
OGGUE	Orisha of the cattle farm	St. Blas	Unclear
AGAYU	Ferry boat driver	St. Christopher He is the Saint of traveller and ferried Christ across the river	Red

IBEDYI	Orishas of Good luck, childhood	St. Cosmas & Damian They are twins	Red & white (male) Blue & white (female)
ORUNLA	Orisha of the oracle	St. Francis of Assisi He is holding a rosary, which is compared to the divination chain	Green & yellow
ORICHA OKO	Orisha of agriculture	St. Isidore He is the patron of the farmers	Lila & turquoise
CHANGO	Orisha of fire, passion, thunder and drums	St. Barbara She is wearing a red dress, and linked to thunder	Red & white
YEGUA	Orisha over the cemetery, and of virginity	Virgin of Mount Serrate	Pink & violet
OYA	Orisha of the wind and owner of fire	Lady of Candlemas Her feast is a feast of candles	Brown, aubergine, dark red
OCHUN	Orisha of the river and love	Lady of Charity She is the symbol of hope	Gold, yellow
YEMAYA	Orisha of the sea, and motherhood	Lady of Regla She is black and the patron of the Bay of La Habana	Light blue & white

OBBA	Orisha of fidelity	St. Rita Has like Obba a wound on the head, and also represents an ideal model for women	Yellow & pink
ODDUDUA	Part of Obatala	St. Manuel	White

(Amira & Cornelius, 1992; en.wikipedia.org, de la Torre, 2004)

Unfortunately it was impossible to find all the information I needed for this table. That is why some colours are missing. Most of the books only tread the most important *Orishas*, and don't write about minor ones like for example *Obaloke*.

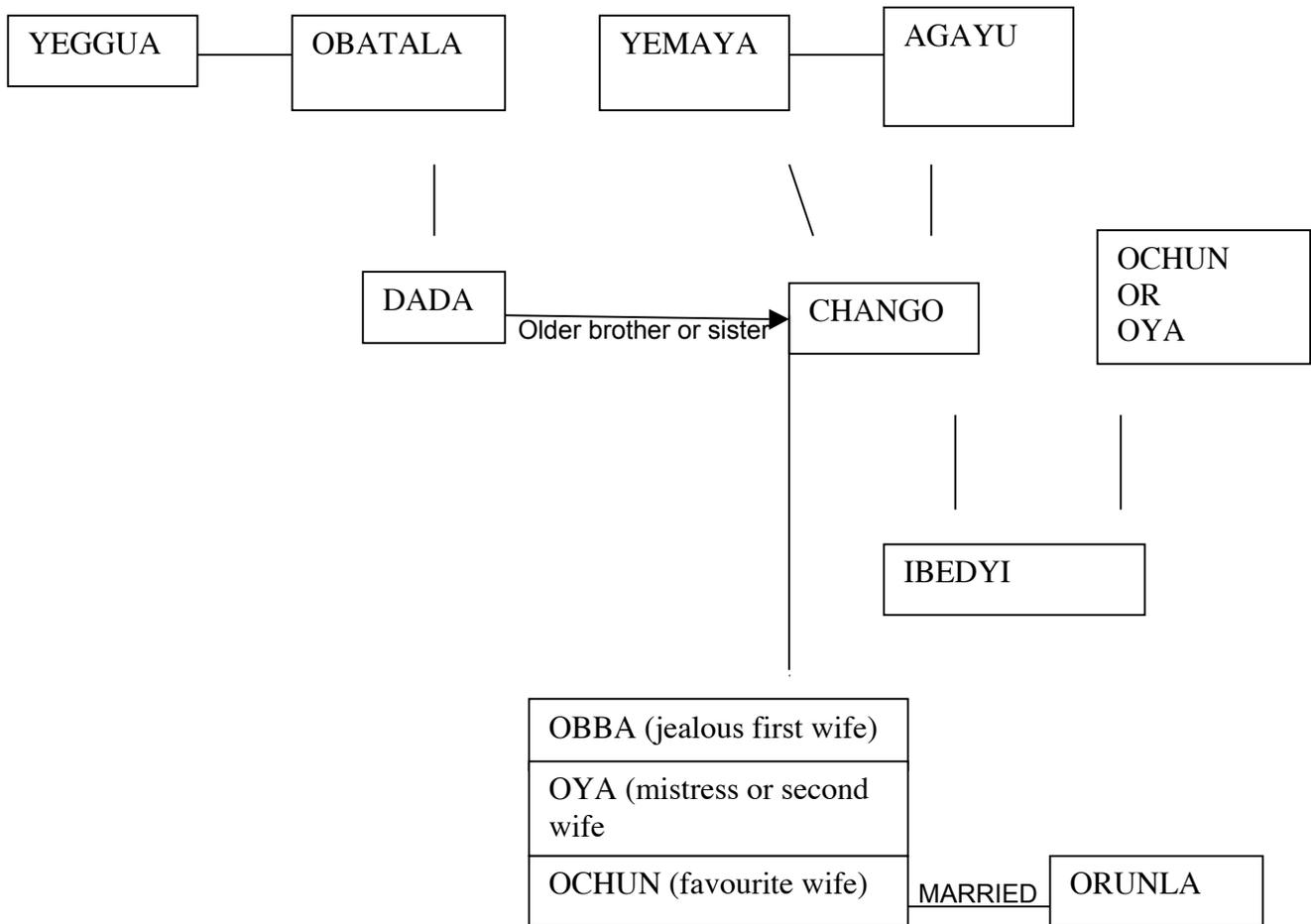
**Figure 2: Chango and Yemaya**



### 2.3 Relations between the Orishas

It is important to notice that the *Orishas* are all related one to another I tried to make a small “family tree”.

**Figure 3: Family Tree**



There are more familial relations between some of the *Orishas*. Sobisch (2004:189) writes that *Chango* and *Ogun* are brothers, and that *Ochun* and *Yemaya* are sisters.

According to Cabrera (2001:14), *Obaloke* is the brother of *Ochosi*, who is at the same time the brother of *Ogun*.

I will discuss the family of *Eleggua* in detail in the chapter called ELEGGUA.

I got all those information by reading different PATAKIS (Amira & Cornelius, 1992; Cabrera & Tarafa, 2001). A *Pataki* is a legend about the relationship between different *Orishas*, or between *Orishas* and humans. Some have their origins in Africa and others originate in Cuba. They are mostly transmitted orally, which is the reason why you always find different versions of one particular legend. For believers, it is not important if those stories really happened. They should also never be taken literally. *The purpose of these stories is to provide guidance and practical help for believers in the here and now* (de la Torre, 2004:57).

### 3 The different parts of a ceremony

Amira writes in his book “The Music of Santeria” (1992:21), that GUEMILERE, or TOQUE DE SANTO are held for different reasons:

*It is held to celebrate the sacred day of an Orisha, to celebrate the anniversary of an individual's initiation into Santeria (often called a birthday party), to honour the Orisha of one's elder in the religion, to express gratitude to an Orisha for a special benefaction that has already be granted or to tribute the Orisha in anticipation of some future benevolence.*

The ceremony has different sections. Mostly four parts can be differed: ORU SECO, ORU CANTADO, IBAN BALO and CIERRE. Below you find a description of every part.

#### 3.1 Oru Seco

The ORU SECO is the first section in a *tambor* or *güemilere*, and its real name is ORU DEL IGBODU. In the ancient land of the Yoruba *Igbodu* was the place where priests received the oracle. *In Cuba it is the area or room in the house set aside as the shrine for the Orisha and used during a ceremony* (Pryor, 1997:15). In the *Oru seco* there is no singing (*seco* means dry in Spanish). Some people say *that the Bata drums themselves are speaking* (Amira & Cornelius, 1992:22). This part of the ceremony is not accessible for everybody.

There are 24 salutes to the *Orishas*. The order in which the salutes are played does not differ a lot from one *tambor* to the other. The *Orisha* for whom the toque is held is taken out of the normal order and saluted last (Mason, 1992:20).

Mostly the following order is played:

*Eleggua, Ogun, Ochosi, Obaloke, Inle, Babalu Aye, Osain, Osun, Obatala, Dada, Oggue, Agayu, Orunla, Oricha Oko, Ibedyi, Chango, Yegua, Oya, Ochun, Yemaya, Obba, Oddudua* (Amira & Cornelius, 1992:23).

John Mason and Fernando Ortiz list *Ibedyi* before *Oricha Oko*.

*Because the salutes are played directly to the Orishas some drummers consider it to be the most important part of a music ceremony.* (Amira & Cornelius, 1992:21)

### **3.2 Oru Cantado**

The *Oru Seco* is followed by the second part, called ORU DEL EYA ARANLA, which means “ceremony in the main room” (Amira & Cornelius, 1992:21). In this part everybody can join. The lead singer, called the AKPWON, leads this section of the ceremony. All the participants together build the chorus, or ANKORI. This musical form, where lead singer and chorus take turns, is called “antiphonal”.

The *Akpwon* starts with a prayer that is immediately followed by a call of the *Iya* player. Then the *Itotele* and *Okonkolo* enter.

Like in the *Oru seco* every *Orisha* is saluted in a more or less fixed order.

The rhythms, which are played in the *Oru Cantado*, are sometimes the same as in the *Oru Seco*.

In one of his articles Thomas Altmann (2005:4) gives the following order:

*Eleggua, Ogun, Ochosi, Oricha Oko, Inle, Babalu Aye, Osain, Obatala, Oddudua, Dada, Obaloke, Aggayu, Ibedyi, Chango, Obba, Yegua, Oya, Yemaya, Ochun, Orunla.*

Here, the *Orisha* for whom the party is held is not saluted in the normal order but again put last (Altmann, 2005:5).

Once again, this order is not always respected, but there are only few changes.

### 3.3 Iban Balo

This section is the longest and a relatively free part of the *toque de santo*. It is sometimes referred to as a FIESTA, meaning party in Spanish. If people get possessed by *Orishas*, it happens during this part of the ceremony. It is the lead singer who is leading the *Iban Balo* by choosing the right songs in order to provoke the appearance of the *Orishas*.

This part is really open, so it is impossible to write some kind of an order down.

### 3.4 Cierre

The last part of a religious ceremony is again more structured. *Cierre* means ending of the ceremony. It starts again with a *seco* part, where the ancestors, or EGGUN, and *Orishas* connected to the death are saluted. After this, several toques for their corresponding *Orishas* are played.

*Eggun, Oya, Babalu Aye, Osain, Yegua and Yemaya.*

Thomas Altmann (2005:6) puts *Yegua* before *Osain*.

During the toque played for *Yemaya*, a person initiated to *Yemaya* flings a bucket of water to clean the room spiritually. After this the bucket is carried to the street, where it is expelled of its contents, presumably including the spiritual energies from the evening's events. The toque ends when the bucket is placed up side down in front of the drummers. With this sign, the *seco* part of the *Cierre* is finished.

The first part of the *Cierre* is followed by songs for *Eleggua*. The Bata drums first play LA TOPA. Then they play SALIDA, meaning exit, where some other songs

for *Eleggua*, but also for *Olokun* are sung (personal communication, Pedrito Martinez, April 2006).

*Eleggua is honored at the beginning and end of all ceremonies. This ensures his blessings upon the event and guarantees that normal order is restored, allowing the participants to safely return to their homes at the evening's conclusion.*

*This sequence of events ensures that the Orishas end their possessions (Schweitzer, 2003:33).*

The very last moment of a ceremony is a short sign, FINAL, played by the Bata drums, marking the end of the ceremony.

## 4 The Bata drums

This chapter is focussing on the Bata drums. You will find information on their origin, their construction and their language. Furthermore I discuss the difference between sacred and non-sacred drums.

### 4.1 Their origin

The Bata drums came with the slaves from Yorubaland, which today is Southwest Nigeria. ([www.batadrums.com](http://www.batadrums.com)).

*They developed about 500 to 800 years ago. They were the official drums of CHANGO, who was both a real king in Yoruba history and the deity, or Orisha. They announced his arrival, accompanied his dance and military campaigns* ([www.batadrums.com](http://www.batadrums.com)).

It is unclear where and when they were first introduced. There are different stories, but analysing all of them would really go beyond the scope of this work.

For detailed information you can read the article on [www.batadrums.com/background/yoruba.htm](http://www.batadrums.com/background/yoruba.htm)

### 4.2 Their names and their role in the music

Bata drums are always played in a set of three drums. The biggest drum with the lowest sound is called *IYA*, which means *mother* in Yoruba.

The middle drum is the *ITOTELE*. This word is build out of different syllables:

- I = stands for action
- Toto = completely
- Tele = to follow, respond

(Pryor, 1997:11)

*The second drum in some Yoruba drum ensembles (although strangely not bata) is referred to as atele, meaning "the one that follows" or "the*

*successor". The second drum in the Nigerian bata ensemble is called omele abo (female accompanying drum). When I say the word itotele to refer to the Cuban drum, my Nigerian research participants have said this comes from atele, so it is not my own ethic analysis (Amanda Vincent, personal note on February 11<sup>th</sup> 2006).*

The smallest drum with the highest sound is the *OKONKOLO*. The author of the CD-booklet of *I am Time* says that this name comes from "*Konkoto*", which means the god, or toy, of children (1997:11). During my research nobody could confirm me this. So I would not call it an official translation.

The Bata drums stand in familial relation to each other. *Iya* is, as noted before, the mother. The *Okonkolo* is the son of the *Iya*. Concerning the *Itotele*, people gave me two different answers. Some call this drum the father, and some the second son (Martinez and Amira, personal communication, April 2006).

Each of the drums plays a special role in the music of *Santeria*. The master drummer plays the *Iya*, because this instrument leads the rest of the ensemble and has the longest and most complex rhythms. The master drummer has the most freedom to play variations and it is him who makes all the calls (*llamadas*) to the *Itotele* (Amira & Cornelius, 1992:15). The *Itotele* must make the difference between simple variations of the *Iya*, where it does not need respond, and calls that need to be answered. So the *Itotele* player really has to know the language of the *Iya* to be able to hear the calls. The *Okonkolo* is the timekeeper. Its rhythmical patterns, emphasize the main metric pulse, are the least complex of the ensemble. The *Okonkolo* player is hardly free to do any variations (Amira & Cornelius, 1992:15).

## 4.3 Construction

### 4.3.1 General Appearance

The Bata drums are double-headed and have an hourglass form that is carved out of solid wood. In Cuba they use cedar or sometimes mahogany wood. The drums are played with two hands at the same time.

*Because of the fact that the Bata drum is a symbol of unity, the shell should ideally be constructed by hollowing out a single piece of wood (Amira & Cornelius, 1992:15).*

Further, Amira (1992) writes that the Bata drums belong to *Chango*, the God of thunder. *Their shape is said to represent Chango's thunder axe (Amira & Cornelius, 1992:15).*

The three drums differ in sizes and pitches. Also the two skins of a drum are, because of the shape of the drum, different in sizes.

The larger drumhead from each Bata is called *ENU* or *BOCA* (mouth) and the smaller one *CHACHA* (butt). The skins are of male goat or deer leather and are nowadays almost always fixed and tuned with the tuning system we know from the Congas. Before the introduction of this system and for the construction of the sacred Bata drums, ropes are used to fix the skins.

A wax-like substance is put on the *Enus* of the *Iya* and the *Itotele* to give it a deeper and duller sound. This substance is called *IDA* or *FADELA*. It is traditionally made out of herbs and blood (Pryor, 1997:11).

What makes the *Iya* special are the two belts with bells attached near the heads. Those bells are called *CHAWORO*. They ring whenever a tone is produced on the drum. Occasionally the *Iya* player also shakes the drum to let them ring. Sometimes, *Chaworo* are linked to *Ochun*, goddess of the rivers and one of *Chango's* many wives (Amira & Cornelius, 1992:16).

**Figure 4: the Bata Drums**



Bata set with Chaworo and the modern tuning system



Traditional set of Bata from Havana

#### 4.3.2 Differences between two different sets of Bata drums

There are two different drum sets: the baptized drums, that have *fundamento de santo*, or *aña*, called also *ILU ANA*, and the unbaptized drums called *ABERIKULA* (not initiated). The big difference probably is that *aberikula* drums cannot be used in religious ceremonies. There, only initiated Bata can be played. During their construction they have had a religious surrounding. Sacred drums, for example, must be made out of material that was once living, like wood, skin and rope. Therefore the skins are tuned with ropes and not with the modern tuning system out of metal. According to Amira some people say that there is a second reason why ropes are used to tune. *Ogun*, the God of metal, is an enemy of *Chango*. That is why his drums shouldn't be constructed out of metal. However this theory is not universally accepted (Amira & Cornelius, 1992:16).

The only metal used on sacred Bata drums is a ring on the cha-cha side of each Bata. It is used to hang the drums when they are not played. Bata drums should

never be dropped on the floor, and one should not sit on or walk over them (Mason, 1992:11).

Not everybody is allowed to touch or play them because Batas having the fundamento, are treated as living creatures. During their baptism, a mystery, called *ANA* or *AYAN* was put inside the drums. *Aña* comes, according to Thomas Altmann (2003:2), from the African name of the tree *Ayan*. In Nigeria the Batas are built out of this wood. This tree is holy and dedicated to *Chango*, who is said to have hanged himself on that tree (Altmann, 2003:3). *Aña*, which is considered an *Orisha*, prefers the *Iya* to live in (Rodriguez, 1995:5).

There is a discussion about whether *Aña* is female or male. In Cuba there is no doubt that *Aña* is a man, but according to John Mason (1992:6) it is a female *Orisha*. There is a second debate between Mason writing that *Aña* is the patron of the Bata drummers (1992:6), and Altmann saying that this is not *Aña* but *Chango* (2003:4).

People can be initiated into *Aña* and receive the spiritual power that allows them to be able to play the sacred drums during religious ceremonies (Corrales, 2000). These drummers are then called OMO-ANA, son of *Aña*. Women and homosexuals are however never allowed to play the sacred drums.

#### **4.4 Their Language**

Fernando Ortiz writes as follows (Pryor, 1997:11):

*The three Bata “hablan lengua” (speak tongue), using the tonal values characteristic of the languages spoken in the African towns from which the slaves were brought to Cuba. The Bata express themselves in Lucumi language, and their notes, like syllables, taken from the vibrating skins of the drums, come out, in order like sounds in a series, to form the words.*

There are rhythms, or toques, where the Bata “say” exactly the same as the songs. Some examples:

*Abukenke for Eleggua,*

*Oyokota for Babalu Aye*

*Cheke Cheke for Oshun*

*Iye Iyekua for Oya*

(listen to examples on CD)

Here, as an example, the lyrics for Oyokota played for Babalu Aye. You can clearly here the lyrics, even if there is only drumming on the recording.

Oyo kota

Oyo kota

Oyo kota

O wanile

O wanile

The six skins of the drums can perfectly imitate the tonal Yoruba language. Yoruba speakers have three basic pitches and glide between them. Depending on the pitch, one word can have many different meanings. This is also the way the Bata talk.

In 1969 Darius Thieme wrote in his dissertation:

*In the majority of the cases, low linguistic tones are played by the large membrane of one or two (Iya and Itotele) drums, mid tones by a combination of large and small membranes of both drums (tones and slaps), and high tones by one or both small membranes.*

*Muffled tones are used to imitate the slide. They are half a tone higher than the open sound. The conversation seems to be mostly between the enus of Iya and Itotele (www.batadrums.com).*

## 5 Eleggua

This is the chapter focusing on *Eleggua*, the *Orisha* of the crossroads. You will get information on the myth around him, as well as on his main characteristics. Later I make a comparison between him and *Legba* of the Vodou tradition.

### 5.1 Short resume of his main characteristics

**Table 2: Characteristics of Eleggua**

Colours:	Red and black
Number:	3 and 21
Day:	Monday
Catholic saint:	St. Anthony of Padua
Symbol:	a cement or sandstone head with eyes and mouth formed of seashells
Accessory:	Whistle and a hooked staff painted red and black
Field of Power:	He is the messenger, the trickster, and guardian of the crossroads
Patron:	Eleggua is Patron of doorways, messengers, tricksters and justice
Personal Characteristics:	Playful, clever, childlike

Eleggua belongs to the three warriors.

He can be compared to *Eshu* (Nigeria), *Exu* (Brazil), or *Legba* (Haiti).

Because of his function you can also compare *Eleggua* with the Greek *Hermes*, or the Roman *Mercury*.

**Figure 5: Eleggua**



## **5.2 Origin**

In Nigeria every City belongs to one single *Orisha*. The origin of *Eleggua* lies in the Yoruba city of Ketu (de la Torre, 2004:59).

## **5.3 Parentage**

There are different stories concerning the parents of *Eleggua*. Miguel de la Torre mentions three possibilities in his book *Santeria* (2004). It could be that *Oya* is his mother. In this case it is not clear who the father is, because *Oya* was married to *Ogun*, but she also was the mistress of *Chango* (de la Torre, 2004:59). Gary Edwards and John Mason, too, wrote (1985:12) about *Oya* being the mother of *Eleggua*. Another myth says that *Eleggua* is the son of *Obatala* and *Yemmu* and the brother of *Ogun* and *Orunla* (de la Torre, 2004:59).

The third story says that *Eleggua* was the first *Orisha* created by *Olofi* (de la Torre, 2004:59).

Sure is that he is the only male *Orisha* not linked sexually to any female. He also has no children.

## 5.4 Myths

Even if *Eleggua* is the youngest of the *Orishas*, he is, after *Obatala*, the most powerful. In every ceremony he must be worshipped and fed first.

This can be explained by the following myth:

*Oludumare was sick and in bed. All the Orishas were gathered around, and one by one they attempted to cure him. But they all failed. Suddenly Eleggua appeared and offered to try to bring around a healing. The other Orishas were perturbed that one of the smallest and youngest among them would have the gall to try what they had failed to do. Yet Eleggua succeeded. To thank him, Olodumare made him the first Orisha to be honoured in every ceremony, (...)*

(de la Torre, Santeria, 2004:61).

Yoruba believe that, if he is not appeased first, he will confuse the ceremony and prevent the offering from reaching the *Orishas*.

He is the divine trickster and does what he wants without restriction. He asked this privilege to *Olodumare* after having eaten the mice that threatened him (de la Torre, Santeria, 2004:60).

There is one famous story about *Eleggua* as a trickster (Iles, 2000):

*Eleggua* was walking between two old friends, wearing a tall hat, which was white on one side and red on the other. Later the friends talked about that mysterious man with the hat, and a fight about the colour of the hat began. At that point *Eleggua* appeared and showed them his two-coloured hat. He was delighted to see that two best friends could fight about something as ridiculous as the colour of a hat and ruining their friendship like that.

## 5.5 Appearance

*Eleggua* is an old man and a child at the same time. He is an endless wanderer who is often disguised as a beggar or a crazy person. *Eleggua* lives in the streets and eats rats.

Because he is always carrying a club he is called the club bearer. The club is a symbol for *Eleggua* being a man and for being the warrior with the strongest power. He has long painted hair, which is a sign of strength. In traditional sculptures it has sometimes the shape of a penis (Edwards & Mason, 1985:11-12).

## 5.6 His role

In Yoruba his name literally means “messenger of the gods” (de la Torre, 2004:59). This is also his role in the Pantheon. He is the messenger between God, the *Orishas* and men. He wears a magic wand, which allows him to travel the roads of God (Edwards & Mason, 1985:9).

*Eleggua* offers choices and is therefore the guardian of the crossroads, marketplaces, the thresholds of houses, and the streets curves (Edwards & Mason, 1985:9). All these locations offer choices and are therefore symbolic for his role in nature. *He offers the options that decide our future* (Edwards & Mason, 1985:8).

*He is also the divine trickster (...) [who] allows man to have many options, deceives him into making unfortunate mistakes, (...) and then sits back as an unofficial observer as man stumbles onto the right or wrong path* (Edwards & Mason, 1985:9).

## 5.7 Caminos

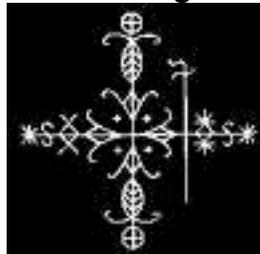
*Eleggua* has twenty-one different roads. It is important to make the distinction between *Eshu* and *Eleggua*. These are both names given to the same *Orisha*, but *Eshu* is the wild and uncontrollable side, and must be kept out of the house, whereas *Eleggua* is a side that has been calmed down (Edwards & Mason, 1985:8).

## 5.8 St. Anthony of Padua

Eleggua is linked to the Catholic Saint named St. Anthony of Padua, who was born in the 13<sup>th</sup> century in Lisbon, and died in Padua, Italy. He is one of the most beloved Saints in Catholic Church. On pictures you always see him carrying the Child Jesus and holding a lily. People make the connection between him and Eleggua because Eleggua often acts and looks like a child (de la Torre, 2004:62).

## 5.9 Legba

Figure 6: the sign for Legba



### 5.9.1 Introduction to Vodou

Before I can start writing about *Legba* in *Vodou*, it is important to know some basic characteristics about the Haitian religion. *VODOU evolved from the word VODU, which means God or spirit, originally used by the Fon-speaking people of Benin* (Armstrong & Knepper, 2002:18).

The main difference between *Vodou* and *Santeria* is the fact that not only one single ethnic group has influenced *Vodou*. It has influences of Nigerian, Congo and the Dahomey regions as well as a part developed in Haiti.

It is important to understand the meaning of the word *NANCHON*. A *Nanchon* is a group of *Vodou* deities, called *LWAS*. These families are linked to the group of slaves coming from a particular region of Africa. There are two main *Nanchons*: the *RADA* derived from the word *Arada*, the name of a kingdom of Dahomey, and *PETRO*. The *Petro Nanchon* has his roots in Haiti. It got its name from a mythological character, Dom Pedro, a maroon rebellion leader (Desmangles, 1992). Some people name a third *Nanchon*, which they call *CONGO*, obviously brought to Haiti by slaves coming from the Bakongo region in West Africa (Desmangles, 1992:94-95).

Each *Nanchon* has its own musical characteristics and instruments.

*Many of the RADA Iwas have Petro (...) counterparts. (...) The personalities of these RADA Iwas become inverted in the PETRO Nanchon* (Desmangles, 1992:95).

In general you can say that the *Iwas* of the *Rada Nanchon* are more calm and controlled than the ones of the *Petro*. The *Petro* section is a really heavy part, which you could compare to the Cuban *Palo* (Amira, private lesson, April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006).

I will show these differences later while talking extensionally about *LEGBA*.

### 5.9.2 The Vodou ceremony

A *Vodou* ceremony is, because of the different traditions, also divided in different parts. Before the actual beginning, the members of the society, or LA FAMILLE, are called together.

The first prayers are mostly in French, Latin or Creole. In those prayers, people talk to the *lwas* by calling them by the names of their corresponding Saints. After each Saint has been saluted, the same sequence of prayers is repeated, but this time, they call the *lwas* by their African or Creole names. The drums do a roll for every new *law*. Now the actual ceremony can start.

As already noted before, the ceremony has several parts. In each part, every *lwa* will be saluted. The order of the salutes stays the same through the whole ceremony.

The first section is the *Rada* part. It has three main rhythms: YANVALOU, MAHI and ZEPOL. For each *lwa* one cycle is played, which mainly consists of two *Yanvalous* followed by either one *Zepol* or one *Mahi*.

Before the Petro section, which is the second main part of the ceremony, the *lwas* of the NAGO, IBO AND CONGO Nanchons are shortly saluted (Amira, private lesson, April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006).

To get more details about the Vodou religion, I can recommend you the book *The Faces of the Gods* by Leslie G. Desmangles. I will not go into more detail, because this work has a musical focus, and not a religious one.

### 5.9.3 Musical differences between VODOU and SANTERIA

The most obvious difference between *Vodou* and *Santeria* is the lack of the Bata drums. Haitian uses different ensembles of drums, called *Batteries*, the French word for drums. There are differences between the *Rada* and *Petro batteries*. In the *Rada* section you have three drums, in *Petro* you only find two (Armstrong & Knepper, 2002:24).

The *Rada* ensemble resembles a bit the Bata drums. There is the small drum, called BOULA, which is played with two sticks, and which keeps a main, simple pattern. This can be compared to the role of the OKONKOLO.

The SECONDE is the middle pitched drum. It is more flexible in its playing, and needs to respond to calls of the lead drum. This drum is played with two hands, two sticks or with only one curved stick, which is called ADJIDA. Again you can see the parallels with the ITOTELE.

The lead drum is called MAMAN, which is French and means mother. You play it with one stick having the form of a hammer, called BAGET, which means stick in French. Just as the IYA player, the MAMAN player gives the calls to change from one rhythm to another and is communicating with the dancers (Armstrong & Knepper, 2002:24).

A second main difference between *Vodou* and *Santeria* is that there are only very few rhythms that belong to a specific *Iwa*. There is no part like the *Oru del Igbo* in the *Vodou* ceremony, where all the deities are saluted with their own *toques*. *Ogou*, *Guede* and *Cousin* belong to the few *Iwas* that have their own *toques*. For LEGBA in *Rada*, you can play all of the three main rhythms. Which one you chose depends on the songs (Amira, private lesson, april 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006).

A last characteristic that you find in a *Vodou* ceremony is the CASSÉ, or break in English. This musical figure is played to change from one rhythm to another. You play it between two different *Yanvalous*. If you change from *Yanvalou* to *Zepol* or *Mahi*, you use the call for that particular rhythm instead of the break. The break

changes the energy of the rhythm very suddenly and therefore causes a fast possession of a member of the society.

Just as in *Vodou*, they have in *Santeria* a key that leads to possession, called the *Puyas*. This is a song where an *Orisha* is attacked and provoked to come down. But the reason for the possession lies in the lyrics where as in *Vodou* the key is a rhythmical phrase (Amira, private lesson, april 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006).

#### 5.9.4 Aspects of Legba

The people having *Fon* roots identify the light of the sun with the creative power of *Legba*. That is why in Haitian ceremonies fire is often lit for *Legba*.

In prayers addressed to him you find words like *Cleronde*, circle of brightness, or *Kataroulo*, meaning the four wheels of the sun's chariot. In *Vodou* the light of the sun is a regenerative life force.

*Legba is the patron of the universe, the link between God and the universe, the chord that connects the universe to its origin. Bondye (God almighty in Vodou) fashioned the universe; Legba has nurtured it, has fostered its growth, and has sustained it* (Desmangles, 1992:108).

As *Eleggua* in *Santeria*, *Legba* is the *Iwa* of the crossroads, known then as *Gran Chemin*, which is derived from French for big road (Desmangles, 1992:109). *Met Kafou* is his reflection in the *Petro Nanchon*. While *Legba* in *Rada* is the source of life, *Met Kafou* is a trickster and destroyer of life (Desmangles, 1992:110). In *Rada*, he is an old and serious man, smoking a pipe and carrying a sack. In *Petro* you can see his childish side.

Furthermore he is, like *Eleggua*, the messenger between the different *Iwas*, as well as between *Iwas* and humans.

As Yoruba and Fon, Vodouisants know *Legba* as the cosmic phallus. He is asked in matters of sex. The cane he is leaning on while walking, called *baton Legba*, represents his phallus, the source of life (Desmangles, 1992:108-109).

*Legba* is also sometimes compared to a policeman, because he keeps the keys to the sacred world, known in Vodou as *Vilokan*. He controls the order in which the *lwas* come down like the policeman controlling the traffic on the crossroads (Desmangles, 1992:108-109). Because of this, *Legba* is identified with St. Peter, who holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven in Catholic religion.

## 6 Toques y Cantos

In this chapter I am focussing on the different grooves and songs that are played for *Eleggua*. First you will find general information on different kinds of grooves and songs. After this come transcriptions and explanations of songs and grooves that can be played for *Eleggua*.

### 6.1 Toques (rhythms)

There are rhythms that can only be played for one particular *Orisha*. Those rhythms belong to them. But furthermore, you have many toques that can be played for a large number of *Orishas*, or even for all of them.

The Bata drums have to follow the songs chosen by the *akpwon* and play the rhythm that fits.

- The toques that belong to the *Orishas* are mainly played in the *Oru del Igbody*. They represent the *Orishas*. Ex. *La Topa* for *Eleggua*.
- *Generic toques* are the grooves that are played to accompany the songs in the *Oru Cantado*
- The *toques especiales*, the special rhythms, are only played in combination with special songs. They are an exact copy of them. Ex. *Iye iyekua* for *Oya*, *Cheke cheke* for *Oshun*.
- *Rumbitas* are also often called party toques. These are two bar dance rhythms that are played for the enjoyment of the *Orishas*. They can be played for every *Orisha*. Nowadays many of these rhythms are used in jazz, fusion or salsa music. Ex. *Ñongo*, *Chachalokafu*.

## 6.2 Cantos (songs)

There exist several types of songs in the *Santeria*. There are more than thousand different cantos, which are all sung in Yoruba, mixed with some Spanish words.

There are three kinds of cantos:

- *Cantos* are just normal songs.
- *Rezos* are prayers, which are normally sung freely in tempo.
- *Puyas* are songs in which the *Orishas* are provoked and made angry so that they come down to earth.

*Cantos* are organised in a kind of medleys, which are called *secuencias*, the Spanish word for sequences. These are more or less traditionally fixed, but there are always some minor changes.

Sequences that are meant to lead to trance are called *tratados*. Here the musical intensity is increasing from the beginning to the end and the songs are getting shorter and shorter (Altmann, 2003:5).

Together with the dance, *toques* and *cantos* build a unity. Only when these three elements are given, the circle is closed.

In this last section of my thesis I made a short analysis of some *secuencias* from artists that, for me, are especially meaningful. You will not find all the songs that can be sung for *Eleggua*. There exist just too many and what I wanted to show are some different orders of songs that all match with the same grooves.

Some songs are used in more than one *secuencia*, but are for example followed by different songs.

In the *Toque* section you will find the main grooves played for *Eleggua*. I only wrote down the most basic form, because that is the first to be learnt. Only if you can play the basics you will be able to understand and play variations and conversations.

**SATA GROOVES**

**CANTOS**

IT WAS DIFFICULT TO FIND OUT HOW TO WRITE DOWN THE LYRICS OF THE SONGS.  
THAT IS WHY I WROTE DOWN THE DIFFERENT SYLLABLES BELONGING TO ONE NOTE.

**GENERAL**

IN BOTH, TOQUES AND CANTOS, I PUT THE CLAVE. THIS SERVES AS ORIENTATION, AND IS NOT PLAYED.

## 6.3 Analyses of the major toques

### 6.3.1 La Topa

This groove is belonging to *Eleggua*, and is played as well in the *Oru Seco*, the *Oru Cantado* and in the *Cierre*. *La Topa* has four different parts. Some people consider the part that I call the second conversation as a part on its own. In the *Cierre* only the first part is played.

*La Topa* is, like *Eleggua*, very tricky. Often musicians can get very stressed with this toque, which leads them sometimes even to stop learning the *Bata*. The most difficult part of this toque is the entrance. Once everybody enters in the correct way, *La Topa* is not the most difficult *toque*. Very often the call of the *Iya* is misunderstood. The most common mistake is to hear the first slap of the *Iya* as first beat.

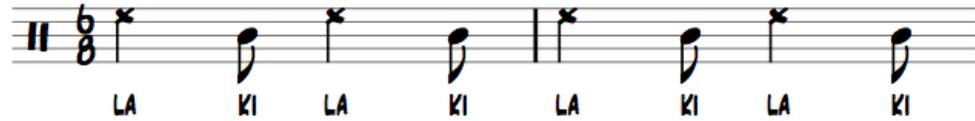
Mainly, when played, the first part of *La Topa* is the longest. It has the most songs that match this groove. Furthermore there are two traditional conversations in this part, and none in the other three parts of *La Topa*.

Sometimes the first transition I transcribed is left out, and the *Iya* player switches to the second part only by playing a loud slap on the second beat of the second bar of his pattern (second bar is played then like bar 13 of the transcription).

The parts two and four are *toques especiales* and are always played with the same songs, called *Ago Eleggua abukenke* and *Abukenke*. You will find them transcribed in the cantos section (cantos para eleggua 1: 4&5).

In the *oru cantado* the third part, which is the only one in a 4/4 bar, is left out.

In this part the *Okonkolo* has to switch from its most common pattern, referred to as *ki-la*, to a pattern that clearly marks the 4/4 time signature. In the last part it changes again back to *ki-la*.



In all of the four sections you can observe the interplay between the *Cha Cha* of the *Iya*, and the *Enu* of the *Itotele*. You can find this normally in every groove. This is also the reason why the *Itotele* player is always sit on the left side of the *Iya*. Like this, the *Cha Cha* of the *Iya*, and the *Enu* of the *Itotele* are side by side.

What is also important to notice is the left hand of the *Itotele*. Playing slaps that are situated on the second and fifth eight notes is a common pattern for the *Itotele*, and works, like the *ki-la* of the *Okonkolo* as a timekeeper.

# LA TOPA

## ENTRANCE

Musical score for the 'ENTRANCE' section of 'LA TOPA'. It features four staves: CLAVE, OKONKOLO, ITOTELE, and IYA. The CLAVE staff shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The OKONKOLO and ITOTELE staves are mostly silent, with some notes appearing in the final measure. The IYA staff has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above some notes, indicating specific playing techniques.

## PART 1

## CONVERSATION 1

Musical score for the 'PART 1' and 'CONVERSATION 1' sections of 'LA TOPA'. It features four staves: CLAVE, OKONKOLO, ITOTELE, and IYA. The CLAVE staff has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a '4' above the first measure. The OKONKOLO, ITOTELE, and IYA staves have rhythmic patterns with 'x' marks above notes, indicating specific playing techniques. The score is divided into two sections by a double bar line.

**CONVERSATION 2**

8

CLAVE

OKONKOLO

ITOTELE

IYA

**TRANSITION** **PART 2**

12

CLAVE

OKONKOLO

ITOTELE

IYA

**PART 3** **TRANSITION**

16

CLAVE

OKONKOLO

ITOTELE

IYA

**PART 4**

20

CLAVE

OKONKOLO

ITOTELE

IYA

24

CLAVE

OKONKOLO

ITOTELE

IYA

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 24 and 25. It consists of four staves. The top staff, labeled 'CLAVE', shows a rhythmic pattern with eighth and quarter notes. The second staff, 'OKONKOLO', features a sequence of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. The third staff, 'ITOTELE', contains a mix of eighth notes and rests. The bottom staff, 'IYA', shows a rhythmic pattern with eighth notes and rests. A vertical bar line separates measures 24 and 25.

26

CLAVE

OKONKOLO

ITOTELE

IYA

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 26 and 27. It consists of four staves. The top staff, 'CLAVE', continues the rhythmic pattern from the previous block. The second staff, 'OKONKOLO', shows eighth notes with 'x' marks. The third staff, 'ITOTELE', features eighth notes and rests. The bottom staff, 'IYA', shows a rhythmic pattern with eighth notes and rests. A vertical bar line separates measures 26 and 27. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of each staff.

### 6.3.2 La Lubanche

*La Lubanche* is another groove that can only be played for *Eleggua*. It is played and sung in the *Oru Cantado*. There it is played right before *La Topa*. In fact it is the first groove played in the second part of the ceremony.

The songs that are sung with this groove are prayers, called *rezos*. Mostly only *Bara suayo* is sung. You can find it transcribed in cantos para eleggua 3: 1, as well as *Ago a chureo* (cantos para eleggua 3: 2) which is another *rezo*.

*La Lubanche* is a really slow groove.

The *Okonkolo* is sticking, like in *La Topa*, to the *ki-la* pattern. It has a very clear 6/8 feel. As always it enters with the open sound in the right hand. In Cuba, the Bata drummers always enter their pattern with the right hand and never with the slap of the left hand, even if it marks the beat.

The *Itotele* plays a really straight groove that has in fact a 3/4 feel and marking every beat, and not like usual the offbeat. *Itotele* together with *Okonkolo* produce this very typical mixture of time signature.

The basic pattern of the *Iya* drum is really open. It leaves a lot of space for individual embellishment. This pattern has in fact also more a 3/4 than a 6/8 feel.

This *toque* also shows very clearly the connection between the drums and the dance. The steps of the dancer fall exactly with the accents played by the *Iya*.



# LA LUBANCHE

**ENTRANCE**

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system, labeled "ENTRANCE", shows the initial rhythmic patterns for four instruments: CLAVE, OKONKOLO, ITOTELE, and IYA. The second system shows a more complex rhythmic structure with triplets and repeated patterns.

**CLAVE**

**OKONKOLO**

**ITOTELE**

**IYA**

### 6.3.3 Ñongo

*Ñongo* belongs to the group of the *Rumbitas*, and can accompany hundreds of songs. It is a two-bar groove, which is not as simple as it may appear.

As for all the other grooves, I only transcribed the basic groove. For *Ñongo*, as for all the *Rumbitas*, there are a lot of variations. Especially with these grooves people use to create their own conversations, and so it is impossible to get to know all of them.

In *Ñongo* you find again the same timekeeping pattern of the *Okonkolo* and the *Cha Cha* of the *Itotele* like in *La Topa*.

The *Enus* of *Itotele* and *Iya* represent the melody of the groove. This melody has a part that produces tension (*Iya*) and one, who is resolving this tension (*Itotele*).

## NONGO

ENTRANCE

The musical score for NONGO is presented in four staves, all in 6/8 time. The first bar is marked as the 'ENTRANCE'. The CLAVE staff features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The OKONKOLO and ITOTELE staves show a melodic line with eighth notes and rests. The IYA staff shows a melodic line with eighth notes and rests, including an accent mark on the first note of the second bar.

#### 6.3.4 Chachalokafu

This groove that is belonging to the group of the *Rumbitas* is probably one of the best-known Bata groove. It can be played for every *Orisha*, and just like *Ñongo*, there are a huge number of songs that go with it. You find *Chachalokafu* also in many Latin Jazz tunes.

This groove is played very fast, even sometimes too fast.

Just as *Ñongo*, people invent their own conversations and variations for this two-bar groove. It exist some traditional conversations, but the number of conversations that are new inventions is huge.

Furthermore the feel of *Chachalokafu* can change a lot from one group to another. Mostly it is played in a binary feel. But you can also find groups that interpret it in a ternary feel.

Again, I only wrote down the basic form. For the *Okonkolo* this straight pattern is the basic. *Chachalokafu* is however one of the few grooves where the *Okonkolo* player can play variations. In those variations, he is not playing anymore on, but around the beat.

The basic pattern of the *Iya* is very open. The player has a lot of freedom do to variations.

*Chachalokafu* and *Ñongo* are mostly on the end of one *tratado*. Once you arrived there, there is no way to go back. They built in combination with very short songs the climax of a *tratado*.

## CHACHALOKAFU

**ENTRANCE**

The musical score for **CHACHALOKAFU** is presented in four staves, each with a common time signature (C) and a 6/8 time signature. The instruments are labeled on the left: CLAVE, OKONKOLO, ITOTELE, and IYA. The score is divided into two measures by a double bar line, with a repeat sign at the end of each measure. The CLAVE part starts with a common time signature and a 6/8 time signature, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The OKONKOLO part has a common time signature and a 6/8 time signature, with a series of eighth notes. The ITOTELE part has a common time signature and a 6/8 time signature, with a series of eighth notes and triplets. The IYA part has a common time signature and a 6/8 time signature, with a series of eighth notes and triplets.

### 6.3.5 Teremina

*Teremina* is a two-bar groove in 6/8. This groove is in fact played for *Ochosi* in the *Oru Cantado*. In this context it is often called *Rumba Ochosi*.

When played for *Eleggua*, it always goes together with the song *Teremina*, and that is the reason why, for *Eleggua*, people call it *Teremina*. You will find the song *Teremina* in cantos para elegua 3: 12.

As you see, the *Itotele* is not playing the offbeat slaps, but accentuating the beat. The *Okonkolo* is also not playing ki-la like in the other 6/8 grooves, but changed to a pattern that gives a bit of a double tempo feel.

Analysing the slaps of the *Iya* and the open sounds of the *Itotele*, you can see, that, except for the first beat of the second bar, the two sounds of the two drums fall together.

## TEREMINA

The musical score for 'TEREMINA' is presented in four staves, each representing a different drum or instrument. The time signature is 6/8. The CLAVE staff features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The OKONKOLO staff shows a pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above some notes. The ITOTELE staff shows a pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above some notes. The IYA staff shows a pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above some notes.

### 6.3.6 Salida

Salida is a groove that is played in the *Cierre* after the *seco* part, and after *La Topa*. Songs for both, *Eleggua* and *Olokun*, are sung while the Bata drums play this groove. These songs are transcribed in cantos cierre, starting in the coro of number 4 and continuing until the end.

The *Okonkolo* part is the same as the *Itotele* pattern for *Yegua*. Also it is almost the same as the *Okonkolo* pattern for *Ochosi*. The only difference is, that there, the pattern starts on the second part of the pattern.

The whole groove is very straight and in a strong 4/4 feel.

The conversation, which I also wrote down, is fitting, like all the other traditional conversations, perfectly with the songs.

## SALIDA

The musical score for "SALIDA" is presented in two systems, each with four staves for different instruments: CLAVE, OKONKOLO, ITOTELE, and IYA. The music is in common time (C) and begins with a double bar line. The first system includes a section labeled "CONVERSATION" and a section labeled "CALL". The second system continues the instrumental parts, starting with a measure marked with a "5" above the CLAVE staff. The notation uses various rhythmic symbols, including eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accents, to represent the complex rhythms of the instruments.

## 6.4 Cantos

# CANTOS PARA ELEGUA 1

BY ABBILONA

**1** *CORO*

VOICE

CLAVE

O RO O SSA O DA RA O DA RA SE MI LA RO YE

Detailed description: This block contains the first musical system, labeled '1' and 'CORO'. It features two staves: 'VOICE' and 'CLAVE'. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 8/8. The voice part consists of four measures with lyrics: 'O RO O', 'SSA O DA RA', 'O DA RA', and 'SE MI LA RO YE'. The clave part consists of four measures of rhythmic notation, primarily using eighth and sixteenth notes.

*LEAD*

VOICE

CLAVE

O RO O SSA O DA RA O KAN LONGO SE MI LA RO YE

Detailed description: This block contains the second musical system, labeled 'LEAD'. It features two staves: 'VOICE' and 'CLAVE'. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 8/8. The voice part consists of four measures with lyrics: 'O RO O', 'SSA O DA RA', 'O KAN LONGO', and 'SE MI LA RO YE'. The clave part consists of four measures of rhythmic notation, primarily using eighth and sixteenth notes.

**2** *LEAD*

VOICE

CLAVE

E CHU O O DA RA E CHU O O DA RA

Detailed description: This block contains the third musical system, labeled '2' and 'LEAD'. It features two staves: 'VOICE' and 'CLAVE'. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 8/8. The voice part consists of four measures with lyrics: 'E CHU', 'O O DA RA', 'E CHU', and 'O O DA RA'. The clave part consists of four measures of rhythmic notation, primarily using eighth and sixteenth notes.

*CORO*

VOICE

O DA RA MA E CHU O MA DO YO YA LE E CHU O O DA RA

CLAVE

*LEAD*

VOICE

E CHU O O DARA O DARA E CHU O MA DOYO YA LE E CHU

CLAVE

*LEAD* *CORO* *LEAD*

VOICE

MADO YALEMA DOYO YA LE E CHU O MA DOYO LA YE MADO

CLAVE

**3** *LEAD/CORO*

VOICE

E CHU O E LE QQUA RA E

CLAVE

VOICE

E CHU O E LE GGUA RA E

CLAVE

VOICE

E LE GGUA RA MO FO RI SA LE E LE GGUA A GO

CLAVE

**4** LEAD/CORO

VOICE

A GOE LE GGUA SUKEN KE A GO E LE GGUA SU KEN KE A

CLAVE

**5** CORO

1. LEAD

VOICE

A SU KEN KE A SU KEN KE O GUN YA TO PA

CLAVE



**CORO**

VOICE  
SA RA SU A YO O TAN KE YE KE YE E LE GQUA

CLAVE

**8 LEAD**

VOICE  
E CHEN CHEN MA WO SE RI MA

CLAVE

**CORO LEAD CORO**

VOICE  
WO CHEN CHEN MA WO SE RI MA WO CHEN CHEN

CLAVE

- |                      |
|----------------------|
| 1-3: LA TOPA (PART1) |
| 4: LA TOPA (PART2)   |
| 5: LA TOPA (PART4)   |
| 6-8: NONGO           |

NUMBER 2: AFTER HAVING SONG THE SHORT PART OF THE SONG,  
YOU GO BACK TO THE LONG ONE BEFORE CONTINUING WITH SONG NUMBER 3

# CANTOS PARA ELEGGUA 2

BY LAZARO ROS

**1** CORO

VOICE

O KO O KAN O DA RA O DA RA SA SA LA RO YE

CLAVE

LEAD

VOICE

O KO O KAN O DA RA O TAN LO GO LE TA... RO YE

CLAVE

**2** CORO LEAD

VOICE

I SA O I SA O RI SHA MAKUTE LEQ SA MOFO RI SA LE

CLAVE

**3** LEAD/CORO

VOICE

E LE QUA GO I MO YU SA E LE QUA RA

CLAVE

VOICE

SARALO YURO A GOE LE QUA RA A GOE LE QUA RAE LE QUA

CLAVE

**4** LEAD

VOICE

A LA RO YE YO KO DE MA KU TA E LE QUA YO KO DE

CLAVE

CORO

VOICE

I SA O RI SHA MA WO A LA RO YE YO KO DE

CLAVE

**5** LEAD/CORO

VOICE

E CHU SE LE KE I SA LA YE A LA RO YE I SA LA YE

CLAVE

**6** LEAD/CORO

VOICE

E CHU O O DA RA E CHU O O DA RA

CLAVE

VOICE

O DA RA E CHU O MA DO YO YA RE E CHU

CLAVE

**7** LEAD CORO LEAD

VOICE

MA\_ MASONYO YA RE E CHU O MA DO YO YARE A SURESI

CLAVE

**8** LEAD/CORO

VOICE

A GO E LE QQUAO YA RE A GO E LE QQUAO

CLAVE

VOICE

YA RE E CHUO DA RA E LE QQUAO YA RE

CLAVE

**9** LEAD CORO

VOICE

I SA RA GO KE RE RE LO NA E CHU KE RE RE

CLAVE

VOICE

I SA RA GO KE RE RE LO NA E CHU KE RE RE

CLAVE

**10**

LEAD                      CORO                      LEAD

VOICE

UN YO LO      SA RA      YO LO UN      KUE LE UN YO LO

CLAVE

1-9: LA TOPA (PART1)  
10: LA TOPA (PART2)

||: 6 - 7 :||

# CANTOS PARA ELEGQA 3

BY ABBILONA

**1** LEAD/CORO

VOICE

BA RA GU A YO O MO NA LA QU ANA MA MA KE NI RA WO E

CLAVE

FREE IN TIMING

VOICE

O SARASURYO E KE - E ECHUOORA O MONALQUANAMAMA KENIRAWOE-E

CLAVE

**2** LEAD/CORO

VOICE

A QO A CHURE O SA RA LA I KI A QO A CHURE O

CLAVE

FREE IN TIMING

**3** LEAD/CORO

VOICE

A GO TO RIO MA LE TA QUAO O LE LE

CLAVE

VOICE

A GO TO RIO MA LE TA QU MO FI E I YA UN

CLAVE

VOICE

SO RO KO DO O MO LO QUO SI RE O O LE LE

CLAVE

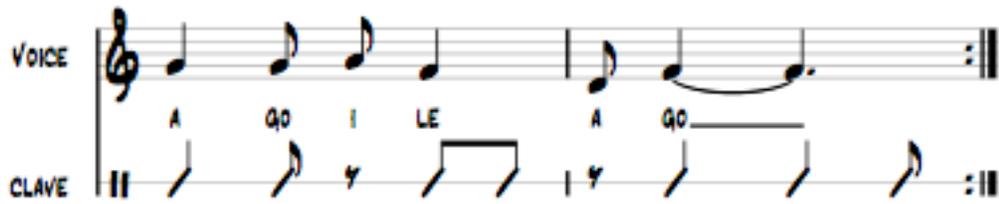
**4** LEAD/CORO

VOICE

A GO A GO A GO A GO

CLAVE

VOICE



CLAVE

5

LEAD CORO

VOICE



CLAVE

6

LEAD CORO

VOICE



CLAVE

7

LEAD/CORO

VOICE



CLAVE



VOICE

LO RO NI LE YO LA QUA NA

CLAVE

9 LEAD

VOICE

SA SA O DA RA KO RO NI LE O

CLAVE

CORO

VOICE

I CHON CHON A SE I CHON CHON A SE O DA RA

CLAVE

VOICE

KO RO NI LE YO SA SA SE MI I CHON CHON A SE

CLAVE

**10** LEAD/CORO

VOICE

E LE QQUA A QO LO NA FU A QUA E LE QQUA A QO LO NA FU A

CLAVE

VOICE

QUA A QUA NI LE LETIQ BA RA O WO NI LE SO SO

CLAVE

VOICE

TI NA O WO NI LE SO SO TI NA E LE QQUA A QO LO NA FU A QUA E LE QQUA

CLAVE

**11** LEAD CORO LEAD

VOICE

SA SA E LE QQUA O YA O YA O YA E LE QQUA

CLAVE

**12** LEAD

VOICE

O KO TE SA RA YO KO TE O KO TE SA RA FU A WO

CLAVE

CORO LEAD

VOICE

TE LE MI NA MI NA TE LE TE LE YO KO TE

CLAVE

**13** CORO LEAD

VOICE

O TI MOLE LA YE LA YE YE KANI O KE RE MODAN SE

CLAVE

**14** CORO LEAD

VOICE

I BAN SA LA KI O KI O KI O O LO NA

CLAVE

**15**

VOICE *CORO* *LEAD*

CLAVE

A LADO SO KO I MA SO KO I MA SO KO MA LE YO

**16**

VOICE *LEAD* *CORO* *LEAD*

CLAVE

KE NI FE BE NA NI QUA E NI CHE BE NA NI QUA

**17**

VOICE *CORO* *LEAD*

CLAVE

SO SA A MA WE

1-2:	LA LUSANCHE
3-10:	LA TOPA (PART 1)
11:	LA TOPA (PART 2)
12:	TEBEMINA
13-17:	CHA CHA LOKAFU

||: 5 - 6 :||

AFTER HAVING SUNG 9 YOU REPEAT 8 BEFORE CONTINUING WITH NUMBER 10



VOICE

LO\_ ECHUMIDARAUN LO SARA I SAKINI FOMODE.

CLAVE

LEAD/CORO

VOICE

SA RA I SA KI NI FO MO DE\_

CLAVE

4 LEAD

VOICE

CHEKECHEKE RIMA SO\_ CHEKECHEKE RIMA SO SA RA

CLAVE

VOICE

QUOUQUOU RIMASO LAQUA NA KIMAECHU KIMASO O

CLAVE

VOICE

MOFELEQUA E NI OCHONCHO E SANICHO RIMASO

CLAVE

VOICE

O MOFELEQUANIACHEBORA A I SANECHULOYUKUA-A...

CLAVE

VOICE

O - O KUN LA RO KO RO NIN QUE

CLAVE

CORO LEAD

VOICE

O SUA RA IE KINI FAWO LE ULARO O RU IN LE

CLAVE

**5** LEAD

VOICE

CLAVE

E LE QQUA NI TA I RE MA SO KU O

CORO

VOICE

CLAVE

E LE QQUA NI TA LA RO YE SO KU O A

LEAD

VOICE

CLAVE

E E LE QQUA NI TA I RE MA SO KU O

**6** CORO LEAD

VOICE

CLAVE

E A GO E LE QQUA E A GO E LE QQUA

**7** LEAD

VOICE

CLAVE

O UNYA LE O UNYA LE KUCHEKU O

CORO

VOICE

CLAVE

E KE RU LE O E RU LE O

LEAD CORO

VOICE

CLAVE

E KE RU LE E KE RU LE O E RU

**8** LEAD CORO

VOICE

CLAVE

O LO KU SA SUA O SA SUA ORI SHA

*LEAD*

VOICE

CLAVE

SA SUA O E O LO KU SA SUA O

1-3: LA TOPA
4-8: SALIDA

THE CHANGE FROM LA TOPA TO SALIDA IS DONE IN THE CORO OF SONG NUMBER 4

## Conclusion

Santeria is the most spread religion in Cuba. What is special about this religion, which came to Cuba with the African slaves, is that you have elements of both, African and Christian religion that fused into one. Often, the Cubans call their Gods, or Orishas, by the name of their Christian Saints. One should not be surprised by seeing pictures of Santa Barbara or of Our Lady of Mercy on a Santeria altar. They linked both religions perfectly. This is called syncretism.

It was however really difficult to find all the links between the Orishas and the corresponding Saints. The reason why some information is missing is because sometimes the link is really superficial, or people just simply don't know them. I also could not find all the information in books, because they mostly treat only the most important Orishas, belonging to the Siete Potencias.

I found out that there are many differences in spelling the names of the Orishas, but also for all the other Yoruban words. Some use the names from the Gods how they are spelt in Nigeria, and some spell it with a big American influence. I just chose for one way of writing and kept it the same in my whole thesis.

I wanted to add a chapter on the sections of the ceremony in my thesis in order to let see the musical order of events. The Oru del Igboju is a very important part, because there is only drumming. One believes that the drums are talking.

I must conclude that there is, except for the third part, an order in which the rhythms and songs are played. This order is fixed traditionally, and my research found out that everybody uses more or less the same order, because all my teachers showed the same order.

Next follows a chapter that treats the Bata drums. I was always amazed by the way of communication through the Bata. But through this thesis I learned even more about the whole language the drums use. I decided to add a CD to my thesis, to illustrate those stories, told by the Bata. In my opinion you cannot only read about music; you have to listen to it and to feel it. The best way to really get into the world of Bata drumming is to go to a live performance, because there,

the whole concept of the language of the drums becomes very clear. Soon, I realized that those are hard to find anywhere in Europe. This was one of the reasons why I decided to go to New York, in order to stretch out my research about this subject and to get as much information as possible.

But also in New York, people sometimes give you different answers on one question. Nobody really speaks or understands the Yoruban language anymore, which is the reason why almost nobody could help me finding a translation for the names of the drums. I also found out two different familial relationships between the drums. Some people say that the Itotele is the father, but others say that he is the second son of the Iya.

The main chapter of this work is dedicated to Elegua, the Orisha of the crossroads. Here a short summary of those facts that I believe to be most important.

Who is he?

He is sometimes a child, but can also be an old man leaning on a club.

Elegua is a trickster, but not devil. He should always be honoured first to make sure that a ceremony turns out well. Because if Elegua is not happy, this can have serious consequences for humans. This makes him to one of the most important Orishas. But a ceremony does not only start with Elegua but also ends with him. So Elegua is the beginning and the end.

In New York I met John Amira, expert in both Santeria and Vodou. With him I discussed the similarities between Elegua and Legba. But he also showed me the music of Vodou, which of course interested me even more. What I found out is, that the drum ensemble of the Rada section is working quite the same than the Bata drums. The musical role of the drums is exactly the same. The big drums of the two music styles, which are both called “mother”, are leading the drum ensemble, and the two small drums are working as timekeeper.

But there are also many differences between those two music styles, like for example the fact that there are almost no rhythms in Vodou that belong to the Gods.

In Santeria however you have grooves like La Topa, La Lubanche and Salida which are belonging to Elegua and which can also only be played for him. In the last section of my work I transcribed and analyzed those rhythms, and some other major grooves where you find songs for Elegua.

I really believe however, that you can never learn how to play the Bata drums with a book. If you want to play those drums, you should get a teacher, and listen a lot to this music. This music is a living language, and the feeling of it cannot be written down. I put these grooves to make my work complete. I think that the transcriptions should be understood more like a part of the research and not as a manual on how to play the Bata drums.

I hope that, by reading my thesis, you got to know the world of the music of Santeria a bit better. If you really want to know more about the religion or the Bata drumming, I believe that you should forget the books and go to Cuba or New York and get in touch with this mystic world.

## Glossary

<b>ABERIKULA:</b>	the not baptized Bata drums
<b>ADJIDA:</b>	curved stick with whom you play on the Seconde
<b>AKPWON:</b>	the lead singer in a ceremony
<b>AÑA:</b>	the soul that inhabits the ritual Bata drums
<b>ANKORI:</b>	the choir in a ceremony
<b>BAGET:</b>	the stick, which looks like a hammer and with whom you play on the Maman
<b>BASS:</b>	the sound that you produce when you hit the drum with the palm of the hand
<b>BATTERIE:</b>	the name for the Vodou drum ensemble
<b>BOCA:</b>	the big skin of a Bata drum, different word for enu
<b>BONDYE:</b>	god almighty in Vodou
<b>BOULA:</b>	the highest drum in the Rada tradition
<b>CABILDO:</b>	a social club in Cuba, serving as mutual aid
<b>CAMINO:</b>	an aspect of an Orisha
<b>CANTO:</b>	a song
<b>CASSE:</b>	the break used in Vodou to change to another rhythm and to provoke possession
<b>CHACHA:</b>	the small skin of a Bata drum
<b>CHACHA</b>	a groove that can be played for almost every Orisha
<b>LOKAFU:</b>	this groove belongs to the group of Rumbitas
<b>CHAWORO:</b>	the bells fixed on the Iya
<b>CIERRE:</b>	the last part of a Bata ceremony
<b>DIA DE REYES:</b>	January 6 <sup>th</sup> , most important feast day for Lukumi
<b>EGGUN:</b>	the death
<b>ENU:</b>	see Boca
<b>ESHU:</b>	the wild part of Elegua
<b>EXU:</b>	the name for Elegua in Brasil

**FADELA:** the wax-like substance you put on the skin of the Iya to make the sound deeper; also called Ida  
**FAMILLE:** the name for the society in the Vodou tradition  
**FINAL:** the phrase played by the Bata drums to end a ceremony  
**FON:** Name given to people coming from Benin and Dahomey

**GRAN CHEMIN:** one aspect of Legba  
**GUEMILERE:** the name for a Bata ceremony  
**GUERREROS:** the warriors: Elegua, Ogun and Ochosi

**HERMES:** Greek messenger God

**IBAN BALO:** the party part of a Bata ceremony  
**IDA:** see Fadela  
**ILU AÑA:** the sacred Bata drums  
**ITOTELE:** the second biggest Bata drum  
**IYA:** the biggest Bata drum  
**IYESA:** a groove that can be played for almost every Orisha. This groove belongs to the group of Rumbitas

**KETU:** the Nigerian city, where Elegua is worshipped

**LA LUBANCHE:** one groove played for Elegua  
**LA TOPA:** one groove played for Elegua  
**LLAMADA:** Spanish word for a call played from the Iya  
**LUKUMI:** the name given to the slaves coming from the Yorubaland  
**LWA:** the Orishas in the Vodou tradition

**MAHI:** a groove from the Rada section

<b>MAMAN:</b>	the biggest drum from the Rada ensemble
<b>MERCURY:</b>	Roman messenger God
<b>MET KAFOU:</b>	one aspect of Legba
<b>MUFFLED:</b>	the dampened sound produced when you leave the fingers pressed on the skin.
<b>NANCHON:</b>	a group of Lwas, all coming from one region
<b>ÑONGO:</b>	a groove that can be played for almost every Orisha. This groove belongs to the group of Rumbitas
<b>OKONKOLO:</b>	the smallest Bata drum
<b>OMO-AÑA:</b>	the person who is allowed to play on the baptized bata drums, because he is initiated to aña
<b>OPEN:</b>	the sound produced on the drum when you don't leave the fingers on the skin
<b>ORISHA:</b>	a deity of the Yoruba pantheon
<b>ORU DEL EYA ARANLA:</b>	the part of a Bata ceremony where all the Orishas are saluted with songs
<b>ORU DEL IGBODU:</b>	the first part of a Bata ceremony where all the Orishas are saluted by their grooves
<b>PATAKI:</b>	a legend telling about the relations between Orishas and men
<b>PETRO:</b>	a Nanchon in Vodou
<b>PUYA:</b>	a song meant to provoke the Orishas so that they come down
<b>RADA:</b>	a Nanchon in Vodou
<b>REGLA DE OCHA:</b>	a different word for Santeria, meaning the path of Orishas
<b>REZO:</b>	a prayer sang freely in tempo
<b>RUMBITAS:</b>	grooves that can be played for all of the Orishas

<b>SALIDA:</b>	one groove played in the Cierre
<b>SANTERIA:</b>	a different word for Regla de Ocha, meaning the way of the saints
<b>SECONDE:</b>	the second biggest drum of the Rada drum ensemble
<b>SECUENCIA:</b>	a sequence of different songs
<b>SIETE</b>	
<b>POTENCIAS:</b>	the seven powers: Eleggua, Ogun, Obatala, Chango, Yemaya, Ochun and Oya
<b>SLAP:</b>	the sound that you produce with your left hand on the Chacha of the Bata drum
<b>TOQUE:</b>	the Spanish word for groove
<b>TRATADO:</b>	a sequence of songs meant to lead to trance
<b>VILOKAN:</b>	the mythological City of the Lwas
<b>YORUBA:</b>	people group coming from today's southern Nigeria
<b>YORUBALAND:</b>	that part of Nigeria where Yoruba people came from
<b>YANVALOU:</b>	a groove from the Rada section

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[www.clarku.edu/~jborgatt/yorubamap.jpg](http://www.clarku.edu/~jborgatt/yorubamap.jpg)

**Figure 2: Chango:** [www.omo-obatala.net](http://www.omo-obatala.net) **Yemaya:** Sandra M Stanton:  
[www.goddess.com.au/goddesses/Yemaya.htm](http://www.goddess.com.au/goddesses/Yemaya.htm)

**Figure 3: the Bata Drums:** [ochemusic.de](http://ochemusic.de)

**Figure 4: Eleggua:** [www.indioproducts.com/webstore/images/79307.jpg](http://www.indioproducts.com/webstore/images/79307.jpg)

**Figure 5: Sign for Legba:** [www.kajou.com/legba.gif](http://www.kajou.com/legba.gif)

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I would like to thank:

My parents and my sister Cathy,

All my teachers of CODARTS in Rotterdam and Wim van der Meer  
from the University of Amsterdam,

Jérôme Goldschmidt and Olivier Congar,

John Amira, James Armstrong and Pedro Martinez,

Paul Schumacher and Marc Lohr

and the “Ministère de la Culture, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la  
Recherche” of Luxembourg for their support