

## ONLINE AUDIO GUIDE 7.1

### SINGING ALONG WITH PETE SEEGER

**title:** “Guantanamera”

**performing forces:** guitar, solo singer (Pete Seeger), audience participation

**composer:** see text

**lyricist:** José Martí

**language:** Spanish, with explanations in English

**form:** verse-and-refrain, with refrain starting out

**function:** see text

**source:** *Headlines and Footnotes. A Collection of Topical Songs* (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings CD 40111, 1995). This is recording 7.1a.

#### Listen for:

- homophonic texture
- verse-and-refrain form
- oral translation by Seeger into English
- spontaneous harmony from audience
- two possible endings

Timing	Structure and text	What happens
0: 00	Refrain  Guantanamera, guajira guantanamera	Seeger establishes basic strum basic phrase of refrain repeats miscellaneous voices join Seeger
0:17	Verse 1  Yo soy un hombre sincero de donde crece la palma y antes de morirme quiero echar mis versos del alma.	first two lines repeat  applause
0: 43	Refrain  Guantanamera, guajira guantanamera	basic phrase of refrain repeats more voices add harmony
1:02	While strumming, Seeger explains the history and meaning of the song	
2:37	Verse 2  Mi verso es de un verde claro y de un carmen encendido Mi verso es un ciervo herido que busca en el monte amparo.	first two lines repeat
	Refrain	

3: 02	Guantanamera, guajira guantanamera	basic phrase of refrain repeats more singers join in
3:21	Seeger urges public to sing, to “get some harmony” and sings a countermelody himself.	
3:40	Verse 3  Con los pobres de la tierra quiero yo mi suerte echar El arroyo de la sierra me complace más que el mar.	first two lines repeat
4:10	Refrain  Guantanamera, guajira guantanamera	basic phrase of refrain repeats more singing from audience, with harmony
4:28	Seeger explains the meaning of Verse 3	
4:43	Seeger repeats Verse 3	
5:11	Refrain  Guantanamera, guajira guantanamera	audience sings, again, with harmony
5:28	Seeger proposes they sing refrain “one more time”  Guantanamera, guajira guantanamera	three final strums on a half cadence)

### English translation:

I am a truthful man  
From where the palm tree grows  
And before dying I want  
To let out the verses of my soul.

My verse is light green  
And it is flaming red  
My verse is a wounded deer  
Who seeks refuge on the mountain.

With the poor people of the earth  
I want to cast my lot  
The brook of the mountains  
Gives me more pleasure than the sea.

**Consider:**

- Does Seeger avoid the “gringo way of ending” in selection 7.1a or not?
- Compare the recording of this song on *The Essential Pete Seeger* (Sony Legacy 475 1598, 2005), the next selection in your Spotify playlist (selection 7.1b). How does this version end, and how you react to the two different endings? If necessary, revisit chapter 3 on this point. Also, do you detect any differences in his interaction with the public?
- How would you characterize Seeger’s singing voice? Having listened to this small sample of his performing style, can you speculate as to why he was such a popular performer?
- When you sing along with Seeger and his public on the refrain, what do you experience?