

## ONLINE AUDIO GUIDE 6.7

### SON JAROCHO

**title:** “La Bamba”

**performing forces:** José Gutiérrez y Los Hermanos Ochoa: requinto (José Gutiérrez Ramón), harp (Felipe Ochoa Reyes), jarana (Marcos Ochoa Reyes)

**language:** Spanish

**form:** strophic, with introduction and extended instrumental interlude

**function:** dance music; expression of Mexican and/or Chicano/a identity

**source:** *La Bamba: Sonos Jarochos from Veracruz* (Smithsonian Folkways CD 40505, 2003)

#### Listen for:

- compás, each lasting about two seconds and repeated throughout
- I-IV-V chords defining the compás
- short, symmetrical melodies
- repetition of text
- vocables
- instrumental interlude, probably with some improvisation and of no fixed length
- close harmonies in vocal parts in final verse

Timing	Structure and text	What happens, translation in summary form
00:00	Introduction	twelve repetitions of compás, i.e. I-IV-V-V; I-IV-V-V; etc., which will continue throughout  broken chords in the harp  requinto plays bass notes  jarana stums and improvises notes in the melody, especially at the half cadence  shouts: “¡A pariente!” and “¡Arpa chico!”  varied strums
00:21	Verse 1  Para cantar la bamba Para cantar la bamba me hallo contento porque me la acompaño porque me la acompaño con mi instrumento. quitilín, quitilín quitilín, quitilín quitilín, quitilín que repiquen campanas que repiquen campanas de Medellín, de Medellín, de Medellín.*	To sing la bamba to sing la bamba I am content because I accompany myself  on my instrument      let the bells of Medellín ring.

00: 40	<p>Verse 2</p> <p>A la morena quiero  A la morena quiero desde que supe  Que morena es la Virgen  Que morena es la Virgen de Guadalupe.  Allá arriba, allá arriba  Allá arriba, allá arriba, allá arriba iré  Yo no soy marinero  yo no soy marinero por ti seré, por ti seré ,  por ti seré.</p>	<p>I love the dark woman  I love the dark woman since I found out  that the dark woman is the virgin  the virgin of Guadalupe</p> <p>I'm not a sailor  but I'll be one for you.</p> <p>shouts of "¡Ah compadrito!" and "¡arribita!"</p>
00:56	<p>Verse 3</p> <p>¿Como quieres que tenga,  como quieres que tenga la cara blanca?  si soy carbonero,  si soy carbonero de tierra blanca  y arriba y arriba,  Allá arriba, allá arriba  Allá arriba, allá arriba, allá arriba iré  yo no soy marinero, yo no soy marinero  por ti seré, por ti seré, por ti seré.</p>	<p>shouts of "¡Ajá!" and "¿De a dónde?"</p> <p>How do you expect me to have  a white face  if I'm a coalman?  if I'm a coalman of the white earth</p> <p>shouts of "¡arribita!"</p> <p>I'm not a sailor  but I'll be one for you.</p>
1:12	<p>Verse 4</p> <p>Para qué me dijiste  para qué me dijiste que estabas sola  si estabas con tu amante  si estabas con tu amante, falsa traidora  Allá arriba, allá arriba,  Allá arriba, allá arriba, allá arriba iré  yo no soy marinero  yo no soy marinero  por ti seré, por ti seré, por ti seré.</p>	<p>Why did you tell me  why did you tell me you were alone  if you were with your lover?  if you were with your lover, false traitor.</p> <p>I'm not a sailor  but I'll be one for you.</p>
1:28	<p>Verse 5</p> <p>Una vez que te dije  una vez que te dije que eras bonita  se te puso la cara  se te puso la cara coloradita  Allá arriba, allá arriba  Allá arriba, allá arriba, allá arriba iré  yo no soy marinero  yo no soy marinero  por ti seré, por ti seré , por ti seré.</p>	<p>shouts of "¡Que cosa!" and "Cómo compadrito"</p> <p>One time I told you  one time I told you that you were pretty  and you blushed</p> <p>I'm not a sailor  but I'll be one for you.</p>

1:45	<p>Verse 6</p> <p>Allá viene la bamba  Allá viene la bamba del otro lado de esa tierra morena  De esa tierra morena que es Alvarado*  Allá arriba, allá arriba, allá arriba iré  ay arriba y arriba  yo no soy marinero  yo no soy marinero  soy capitán, soy capitán, soy capitán.</p>	<p>shouts of “¿De dónde?” and “¡Ajá!”</p> <p>There comes la bamba  there comes la bamba from the other side of that dark land,  That dark land which is Alvarado</p> <p>I’m not a sailor,  I’m a captain.*</p>
2:02  2:27  2:41	<p>Interlude</p>	<p>probably some improvisation</p> <p>shouts: “ ¡Métele al arpa compadre!”</p> <p>harp solo, playing melody in block chords (i.e. not broken) while other instruments maintain the accompaniment pattern in their previous roles</p> <p>harp returns to arpeggiation, preparing return of the voice</p>
2:44	<p>Verse 7</p> <p>¡ Ay! le pido, le pido  ¡Ay! le pido de corazón  Que se acabe la Bamba  que se acabe la Bamba, venga otro son  Allá arriba, allá arriba  Allá arriba, allá arriba, allá arriba iré</p> <p>Yo no soy marinero  Yo no soy marinero,  por ti seré, por ti seré, por ti seré—</p>	<p>Ah, I ask from my heart  that la bamba finish already!  that la bamba ends  Let’s have a different <i>son</i></p> <p>I’m not a sailor  but I’ll be one for you  all voices join, in close harmony</p>
		<p>delayed final chord</p>

**Notes on translation:** Medellín refers not to the city in Colombia but to a municipality in the state of Veracruz.

Alvarado is a city in Veracruz.

When the singer declares “I’m a captain” (having just said repeatedly that he’s not a sailor) he is probably indirectly asserting himself as a person of rank or quality, worthy of the object of his affections.

**Consider:**

- The Virgin of Guadalupe is a symbol of Mexican Catholicism. Why might she figure in this son jarocho?
- Follow the repeated harmonic progression throughout the entire song. You can do this easily by singing do-fa-sol-sol. What is your experience when you concentrate mainly on this one aspect of the music? Do you feel your peripheral hearing (i.e. your perceptions of other elements of the song) at work as well?
- Revisit the section on the “gringo way” of ending a song, discussed in chapter 3. How does this performance end?
- How do you evaluate the presence of complete sentences combined with nonsense words and repetition and elements of music such as tempo and form? Is the overall effect one of playfulness? Pent-up frustration? Or is it impossible to tease out any one meaning? Be sure to support your conclusion.