

ONLINE AUDIO GUIDE 4.1

SANTERÍA

title: Babalú Ayé (*Oru para Todos los Santos*, part 2)

performing forces: solo male singer, chorus, cachimbo, mula, caja, chekere, cowbell (Agrupación Ará-Okó, Bembé Ensemble)

language: Lucumí

function: to propitiate the oricha Babalú Ayé

form: call and response

source: *Sacred Rhythms of Cuban Santería* (Smithsonian Folkways SF 40419, 1995)

Note: an “Oru” is a group of rhythms and songs in santería. In *Oru para Todos los Santos* (All the Saints) the song for Babalú Ayé is one of several songs dedicated to various orichas.

Listen for:

- call-and-response singing
- a series of different although closely related, conjunct melodies, some pentatonic
- variety of timbres in the percussion
- variety of techniques in the percussion
- with few exceptions, percussion plays consistent pattern
- tonal melody between caja and mula
- mention of Babalú Ayé’s name

Oru para todo los santos part 2: Babalú Ayé

Timing	Text	What happens
0:00	leader: Bariba o ge de ma	call (soloist or leader)
00: 03	Chorus: Mole yansa mole a	response (chorus)
00:05	leader: Ye, bariba o ge de ma chorus: Mole yansa mole a leader: Ye, ba nke ba nke te ma chorus: Mole yansa mole a	cowbell begins on the word “yansa,” drums and shekere establish basic pattern: cachimbo combines open tones and slaps mula plays a steady pulse that combines the heel of the hand, the tip of the hand, along with slaps caja plays open tones chekere keeps steady pulse
00:16	leader: Ya kaka kuko tori eleko Ya kaka kuko tori eleko Ore baba	new melody, longer solo and no longer pentatonic
00:24	Babalú Ayé awa leri so	caja plays variations along with the

00:31	<p>a la ye baba</p> <p>chorus: Aberi kutu awa leri so, Aberi kutu awa leri so, La ye baba Babalú Ayé awa leri so, la ye baba</p>	<p>singer</p> <p>chekere continues keeping pulse</p> <p>chorus varies new melody, caja variation, then plays along with singers</p>
00:45	<p>leader: Ya kaka kuko tori eleko Ya kaka kuko tori eleko Ore baba Babalú Ayé awa leri so, a la ye baba</p>	<p>leader varies melody chorus introduced at 00:31</p> <p>mula variation (quicker rhythms)</p>
1:00	<p>chorus: Aberi kutu awa leri so Aberi kutu awa leri so Laye baba Babalú Ayé awa leri so, la ye baba</p>	<p>chorus repeats leader's melody</p> <p>caja variation</p>
1:14	<p>leader: Babalú Ayé awa leri so, la ye baba</p>	
1:19	<p>chorus: Babalú Ayé awa leri so, la ye baba</p>	<p>chorus repeats leader's melody slightly quicker tempo</p>
1:24	<p>leader: Ye, Baba e baba soroso Baba e aki maya soroso Babalú Ayé iyan fo mode awa si re, si re</p>	<p>leader sings new melody caja variation</p>
1:37	<p>chorus: Baba e baba soroso Baba e baba soroso Babalé Ayé iyan fo mode baba si re, si re</p>	<p>chorus sings new melody caja plays variation pitches exchanged between caja and mula</p>
1:51	<p>leader: Si re re sere moba</p>	<p>entrance of leader overlaps with chorus</p>
1:53	<p>chorus: Baba si re, si re</p>	
1:55	<p>leader: Elu aye si re re moba</p>	
1:57	<p>chorus: Baba si re, si re</p>	<p>chorus repeats previous response</p>
1:59	<p>leader: Ye, towe towe, towe towe Asohano mawe a</p>	
2:06	<p>chorus: Towe towe ama lu fi nya mawe</p>	<p>cachimbo and mula maintain the basic rhythm; occasional interjections from caja</p>
2:09	<p>leader: Aru finya magwe Africa ala mawe</p>	
2:15	<p>chorus: Towe towe ama lu fi nya mawe</p>	
2:18	<p>leader: Aru finya mawe aso kalala mawe a</p>	

2:23	chorus: Towe towe ama lu fi nya mawe.	drums coincide with last two syllables
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English translation:

Meet and discover respect. He who cuts arrives always.
 I will turn aside avoiding him. I will turn aside.
 Clean the cut, clean the cut
 Father, lord of the world, we are tied down. Father, favor me.
 Father, do good, do good.
 Provoked to wash, provoked to wash.

Translation by John Mason, *Orin Òrìṣà: Songs for Selected Heads*. New York: Yoruba Theological Archministry, 1992.

The author thanks Brian Rice and Steven Cornelius for extensive assistance with this guide.

Notes on translation: “Baba” means “father.” As noted in the text, “Asohano” is the Arará name for Babalú Ayé. Some of the translations remain obscure. “Cuts” refers to cutting down people with disease.

Consider:

- Listen again, now keeping in mind the statement “the drums are talking” discussed in the text in relation. How does such awareness affect your experience of this selection?
- Listen again and try to follow the individual percussion instruments: cowbell and chekere (probably easiest), caja, mula, and cachimbo. See if you can distinguish them, at least at various points. If you can’t do this, don’t worry. Just be attuned to the overall experience. But do keep trying, as such exercises will sharpen your hearing.